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IN THE SHADOW


HENRY C. ROWLAND



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IN THE SHADOW

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BY

HENRY C. ROWLAND

Author of

"Sea Scamps," "To Windward," etc.



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PART I
ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

THE AWAKENING

THE house, very old, but, like the lawns, finer for many decades of care and service, rose tall and proud and graceless from the quadrangle bordered by its close-trimmed hedgerows. In the morning the cold, blue sunlight lay thin upon the drab walls, slowly advancing across the castellated roofs, leading the day from dawn, over high noon, and growing almost mellow in its descent. Of a spring day, when the weather was fair, those who had never lived in brighter climes considered it radiant; it was the lack of this brilliance which struck a pang of homesickness to the heart of Manning Moultrie whenever he was in England.

"You do not know what sunlight is," said Manning to Giles Maltby, as the two and Virginia sat on the edge of the tennis court waiting for the dew to be whipped away by such feeble power as lay in the Kentish sun. "In Carolina the sunlight has a substance and a color; one can almost see it of itself apart from what it lights; it's palpable, like a flame, rich as cream; over here it's anemic and strained out; skimmed milk. It hasn't even got the strength to dry the court." He rapped his racket impatiently against the rustic bench.

Giles looked at him thoughtfully. Giles had never been away from England; had not wanted to go away until, in the natural order of things, travel was pre-

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sented, as had been the other features of his education. First there had been tutors, then Eton; there was no place like Fenwick for vacations; athletics claimed all of the time not spent in study. Oxford followed; he had no wish to penetrate beyond the fullness of his life, but now that he had graduated he was ready to travel. There was no hurry.

He looked at Virginia to see if she agreed with Manning. Her pensive face was turned expectantly toward her brother; she loved to hear of the home which she so dimly remembered, and, like other people, never tired of hearing Manning talk. Giles was waiting also; but, oddly, Manning did not continue.

"Must be a jolly place—Carolina," observed Giles. "No end of hunting and fishing, is there not? And—and—what else do you do, Manning?"

"Not much in the way of sport," said Manning. "As a matter of fact, it's an awful hole, Giles. Of course I am busy with the rice and cotton; everything is changed since our father's time. Most of the old families are scattered and gone, or sunk in poverty. There were only a few who kept on working their plantations after the war."

"Beastly shame, your war! What?" said Giles. "I fancy the turf's dry enough——" He ran his hand over the close-cropped grass, which was soft and full as green plush. "What do you say?" He twirled his racket in the air.

"Rough!" called Manning. "Rough it is. Going to play, Sis?"

Virginia shook her head. "Not just yet." Her voice was very deep, very low, and the words seemed

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to come already formed from the soft throat. There was a husky vibration which made people stare when first they heard her speak; the men invariably returned to hear her speak again. People ascribed to her a singing voice; she could not sing a note, could scarcely make her voice carry across a street, yet it undertoned the clatter of many people talking in unison.

Manning and Giles threw aside their blazers and stepped into the court. Two men of the same race could scarcely have been more different, thought Virginia. Giles was big—bigger in muscle than bone—strong, sure, but a trifle awkward; many of his best strokes seemed accidental, but were not. Giles was very fair, ruddy, with crisp brown hair and eyes like sapphires. Manning was a trifle undersized, quick and graceful as a cat, with hair as straight and black and glossy but far finer than that of an Arapahoe, and a face of rather striking beauty.

He and Virginia were similar in feature, but distinctly different in expression. Virginia was tall for a woman, Manning short for a man; both had the same clear, faintly tinted complexion, light-hazel eyes; both had the same square roundness of face, the supple fullness of limb, the fineness of skin and feature, the somatic type of the Celt: Irish, French, or both. What was simply winning in Manning was in Virginia seductive; the short nose, the mirthful mouth, the dreamy eyes. People were not ready to admit the beauty of Virginia, even while unable to take their eyes from her. Manning held his audience by his high, hard voice, startlingly different from that of his sister, and by the cold cynicism of the things he said which most people con-

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sidered affected in so young a man. His poise seemed too perfect; yet Manning knew his world.

Virginia watched the game, interested less in the play than in the players. Her brother she saw but one month in the year; Giles, for two; also at odd weeks during the winter. It was generally accepted that Giles and Virginia would marry; Manning expected it, Virginia also; and Giles had long since quietly determined that this should some day come to pass.

The set was finished; Virginia did not know who won.

"You and Giles play this time, Sis," said Manning.

"Why not join?" asked Virginia. "Tired?"

"No! I want to smoke . . . and think."

"Philosopher!"

"No . . . man of affairs. I got a letter from my manager last night; there is a chance of getting a big tract of good rice land for a song; perhaps I may have to clip my vacation——"

"You shall do nothing of the sort," said Virginia.

"Should hate to. I'd buy the land from here if I were sure of being able to get the hands to clear it this season. They are old rice lands, no doubt laid out in the days of the buccaneers. One marvels how they did it; cleared acres and acres of the most hopeless tangle of swampy forest, built dikes that look like old fortifications, and all they had to do it with were slave labor and a black-snake whip!"

"Poor devils!" said Giles.

"I fancy they had a bad time. The work was tremendous, considering the conditions. There is no record of it beyond the old dikes and the patches of

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forest where the growth is lighter and of a different variety."

"Then you must clear it over again?" asked Giles.

"That part is not difficult; the dikes are the main problems, and they are almost as good as ever. One must build new trunks, of course, and plug rat holes. Sometimes you will find a loblolly three feet in diameter, or a great gum or live oak growing right from the middle of one of these dikes, and as they could not have come until after the plantation was abandoned, one can see that they are pretty old. We have our antiquities in Carolina, Giles."

"Don't doubt it—if you call anything under five hundred years an antiquity. I fancy this lawn is that."

"Don't!" implored Virginia. "You make me feel so transient."

"Of course the impression is different in a place kept up; one doesn't feel the flight of time," said Manning. "I could show you the ruins of old estates about Charleston and Georgetown that would impress you as older than Fenwick."

"Entirely abandoned?"

"Utterly; the only tenants that remain are the snakes and spiders and the ghosts of dead ambitions; yet fifty years ago that country was the garden spot of the continent."

"Owing to the change from slave to paid labor?" asked Giles. He was interested in all problems sociological and economic; he had elected politics for his future career.

"No," replied Manning bitterly; "owing to the change from slave labor to none at all. The scoundrels

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won't work unless they're made to, and then only at their own convenience, without any reference to yours. They are the curse of that country, Giles."

"But what other form of labor could stand the climate?" asked Virginia.

"Italians from the Campagna, Japs, Chinese, Japanese, Hindoos, even our new citizens in the Philippines. But if we imported them, we'd have to feed the negroes just the same; if they can earn a part of their living, it's cheaper for us to let them. You and Giles play a set, Sis," Manning concluded. He detested the topic of the negro, and avoided it as much as possible.

Giles clambered to his feet with strong awkwardness; Virginia, lithe, supple, graceful as an ocelot, was in the court before him, and the game began, Giles's handicap being the double court, while Virginia played within the single lines. Manning, from the players' bench, the blackest of Havana cigars clinched between his even teeth, watched them thoughtfully.

A fair inheritance had been evenly divided between the brother and sister; it would be hard to say which had shared more fully. Manning had drawn the head, Virginia the heart; Manning made money, Virginia friends. Now, as he smoked and watched and brooded, his tawny eyes, a shade lighter than his sister's, rested proudly upon her and kindled with ambition as they swept to Giles, looming as he did against the ancient background of his ancestral home, the park of oaks, the towers, and the thin, cold, aristocratic sunlight. Manning felt that he had done his duty by his orphan sister; remained, the fulfillment of her duty to him.

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"Set!" cried Virginia triumphantly. "You didn't try!"

"'Pon my honor, I did!" swore Giles stoutly. His overheated appearance bore out his statement. Virginia was as cool and sleek as a kitten. "The double court is no end of a handicap. Believe I'd rather give you two points on every game; less work anyway. I only know of one chap around here who could give you that handicap and stand a chance, Virginia."

"Who is that?"

"A friend of mine, Aristide Dessalines. He can stand in the middle of the court and reach into either alley. Arms like a gorilla!"

"A Frenchman?" asked Manning.

"No!—not exactly. He's Haytian . . . chum of mine at Oxford . . . odd chap."

"Haytian?" echoed Manning. "That's worse; same thing as French, except that it often carries a dash of black."

Giles laughed. "It does better than that by Dessalines. He's *all* black—black as ebony!"

"*What!*" cried Manning, sitting bolt upright.

"Yes," replied Giles calmly. "He boasts that he has not a drop of white blood in him. Says he's what they call in Hayti a 'Congo.' Terrific looking chap, yet fascinating—rather."

Virginia nodded. "I've seen some of those people in Paris. All the rich Haytians go there, you know. Most of them are black as jet."

Manning stared from one to the other in growing perplexity.

"But I don't understand—" said he to Giles. His

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voice hardened. "You speak of him as a friend of yours, as if the brute were an equal."

Giles looked disturbed. "So he is, socially," he answered, in a cold voice. "Dessalines is a gentleman—a lot better sort than a good many one meets; besides, he's well born in his own country. He's a count."

"But he's a negro!" cried Manning.

Giles glanced at him in surprise. "Don't see that his color makes any difference. What's the odds whether he's African or Indian or Persian or Turk, as long as he's well born, well educated, and well behaved? They all thought a lot of him at Oxford; he was asked everywhere. Clever chap, too, Aristide. Fine speaker. He is very religious; used to do a good deal of evangelical work with a little sect which called itself the 'Unionist Presbyters.' Aristide did most of the preaching. Got them no end of recruits. Fine chap, Aristide," he concluded, a trifle doggedly.

A swarthy color showed through Manning's Carolina tan. When angry or excited the pupils of his eyes contracted, showing more of the light hazel, with the result that the whole eye seemed to pale; this gave a sinister effect not without its fascination to his passionate face. Virginia read the danger signal and threw a fender between the two men; not that any was necessary, as their friendship was too firm to permit of a quarrel.

"But a negro is of an inferior race, Giles. He does not come of an old civilization, like the others you mention."

"All the more reason for giving him a hand up when you see him trying hard to rise, it seems to me."

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"If you do," said Manning, "his next step will be upon the small of your back; if you knew them as I do, Giles, you'd have different ideas on the subject."

"Very possibly; never thought much about it myself." He turned the matter in his mind, and his British fairness asked another chance for the under dog. "But you've seen a different crowd of the beggars, Manning; in the States they were all slaves until a few years ago; first they were dogs, then they graduated them to stray dogs, whereas in Hayti they've been their own masters for one hundred years, and had a chance to get civilized. Ever been to Hayti?"

"No," answered Manning slowly, "I don't know much about Hayti, but I've seen negroes in England and France and America, and there has never seemed to me to be any more difference than in the same breed of dog in these countries."

"The Haytians one sees in Paris are terrible," said Virginia, with a little shudder. "So black and sleek and unctuous—" She shuddered again. "They are dreadful creatures; they fascinate one, like a great, smooth, glistening black snake—ugh! Do let us talk of something else!" Her low voice carried such a thrill of loathing that both men glanced at her in surprise. Giles looked greatly concerned.

"If you feel that way about 'em, I won't ask him to the house. Glad you spoke of it, Ginny."

Manning stared at the young Englishman with an expression half angry, half amused. "Gad! you English are funny people," he commented, with a scarcely polite frankness. "Fancy asking a big buck nigger to your house!"

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Giles flushed. "Must say I can't see it," he answered, a trifle stiffly. "That is, from a man's point of view; of course a woman is apt to—to get ideas. Des-salines played one of our forwards, and is the best cricketer we've had for years; I've often borrowed his jersey or blazer, just as I would any other chap's . . . why not? I have never heard of his doing or saying a low thing; fact is, he sets a pace that's rather hard for a chap to hold—doesn't smoke; scarcely ever drinks anything; awfully decent chap. Just now he has got the Haddington cottage on the Crowleigh place . . . doing some reading; saw him yesterday." He glanced at Virginia; something in her expression puzzled him; he colored abruptly and ceased speaking.

"Here comes Sir Henry," said Manning, whose quick eye had caught sight of a tall figure approaching from the sunken gardens. "You and Giles play another set, Sis; haven't finished my cigar."

"If that's the way Carolina makes you feel I'll stay in England, thank you," said Virginia, with a laugh.

Manning's physical indolence was always a joke to Giles and herself, as well as a source of secret wonder to the former, who was compelled to work off his superabundant vitality a good deal as a rodent is obliged to gnaw to keep its teeth from growing into its brain. Giles did not understand how a man of Manning's high nervous energy could take so little exercise and yet keep his form. He had learned that when the whim seized Manning he was indefatigable.

Sir Henry Maltby walked up the turf steps, passed under the pergola, where he paused for a moment to

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examine the grape blossoms through a pocket lens, rearranged a few tendrils, then made his way along the hedge of clipped yew in the direction of the tennis court. Every few steps he would stop to examine the bark of a tree or the condition of a leaf.

Manning watched him keenly, very keenly, as it was his habit to observe everyone with whom he came in contact. Manning's large, clear, inconsistent hazel eyes were the equivalent of any three senses of most people; he had the faculty of snapping his mental photograph instantaneously, and developing and printing later and at his leisure. He could spend hours watching people; hours after they had passed from his sight in assaying what he had seen; this estimate was apt to be rather slow, seldom incorrect.

Sir Henry skirted Virginia's end of the court with a jesting word of encouragement to the girl, then approached and greeted Manning, who had risen, and asked permission to share his seat. No doubt he would have done the same with his son; courtesy was as much a part of Sir Henry as his tall, spare figure and deep-lined, thoughtful face. He was a bit of a puzzle to Manning, who sometimes wondered how much of the man was latent beneath the unruffled calm of the student. Giles was of his mother's type, blue-eyed, rosy, full figured, mirthful; too normal to be interesting until the smooth surface was seamed by a caustic which would wash away the plastic part.

"As usual, you are the appreciative audience," said Sir Henry to Manning. The baronet liked Manning, in whom he recognized qualities both sound and subtle; he enjoyed his company because he combined the ma-

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ture mind of age with the refreshing confidence of youth; perhaps he respected him the most because Manning was an expert in botany and all matters pertaining to agriculture. As a *dilettante* he bowed to Manning's practical professional ability.

"Will you smoke, sir?" asked Manning, offering his cigar case.

"Thank you." Sir Henry selected a cigar with care. "The tobacco which you Americans bring over always tastes so much better than that imported by dealers."

"I fancy that is because it is better tobacco," said Manning dryly. He had not a high opinion of the cigars usually to be had at English houses.

Sir Henry's scholarly face was lit by a gleam of amusement.

"A very plausible solution." Manning offered him a match, and Sir Henry smoked for a moment in silence; then he took the cigar from his mouth and examined it critically.

"It is delicious, so fragrant and full flavored, yet so mild. Pardon me, Manning, if I ask what one must pay for such a cigar in New York."

"It is hard to say; a few of my neighbors and I have them made expressly for ourselves."

"You rice planters are a pampered set. I shall never forget the luxury in which your grandfather lived; you know your father and I used to alternate our vacations, one year here, the next in Carolina. I suppose the old place is just the same. The great house, with its wide verandas; the park of live oaks; the stables, half a mile from the house; the wonderful vista across the vivid green of the rice fields, and the river and piney woods

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beyond. In the hot season we used to go into Charleston, but would often ride out to the plantation to spend the day and frequently the night, although that was strictly against orders."

"I wish that you and Lady Maltby would come out this autumn with Giles."

"I should like to; we would both enjoy it. That section contains much of interest to me, but it would be full of sad associations. I should much enjoy witnessing your experiments with the tea. Do you think that it will be a success?"

"I am rather doubtful in regard to my camelias; one really needs young ladies to take care of those wretched plants in their infancy; each one must be coaxed and petted and coddled, with just the right proportions of sun and shade and heat and cold."

"Another thing which has been interesting me greatly is your racial problem. I am deeply in sympathy with what is being done for the advancement of the negro, as I presume are all of the broad-thinking members of the upper classes in the South as well as the North."

Manning sucked at his cigar without immediately replying. There was no topic more distasteful to him than that mentioned by his host; he had been drawn into the discussion with Giles through shocked sentiments, and even then under protest, and had quitted it at the earliest opportunity. Although his views were clear and positive, he disliked to advance them. He argued with outsiders on the negro question in a good deal the same spirit with which a great surgeon might be drawn into an argument with a layman regarding his craft—half-heartedly, with a sense partly of disgust at the ignorance

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of the other, partly self-contempt for deigning to discuss the matter at all, and a thorough inward conviction of the indisputability of his own views. Manning was satisfied that he knew as much as was to be known on the subject from theory and practice, education and life-long association. He acknowledged the virtues of the negro race just as he knew to the ounce their limitations; for him to allow himself to be led into an argument regarding a subject on which he was so thoroughly informed was futile and a waste of time.

Possibly the baronet, with his quick intuition, perceived something of this, for he did not pursue the topic; instead, he followed Manning's eyes to Virginia. The young man was regarding his sister with the proud satisfaction which in a cold nature so strongly supplements affection.

"She is a beautiful girl," said Sir Henry, "and as good as she is beautiful. They are inseparable, those two—" he added, partly to himself.

"Would you like to have them marry?" asked Manning with the blunt directness which was one of his most subtle traits.

Sir Henry started a trifle, then looked at Manning with a startled expression—such an expression as one might wear at hearing another voice a present thought. A tinge of color showed in his lean face.

"Eh, I—I have—of course; I will not say that the idea has not occurred to me, Manning, yet it is each time as difficult for me to realize that the two children have grown up—are at a marriageable age—" He was silent; both men remained for several moments occupied with their thoughts. Sir Henry smoked rapidly, nerv-

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ously; Manning, with the calm deliberation of a Sioux Indian.

"Frankly," said Sir Henry, "nothing would please me more. Virginia is charming, womanly, high-minded——"

"—And rich," added Manning, sententiously.

Sir Henry colored. "My dear Manning——" he began.

"It is a most important item——" supplied Manning, a trifle brusquely. "The French have the right idea about these things; personally, I see no reason why they should not marry. Virginia has finished her education, and it seems to me that the sooner her future is established the better."

Something in the young man's tone caused Sir Henry to observe him curiously. Virginia was better known to him than Manning. There was plenty of evidence that Manning was a kind and devoted brother, and Sir Henry correctly presumed that the profits of the plantation under his management were in excess of what they had ever been before.

"We should all favor the marriage," he answered slowly. "Your father was my dearest friend, Manning, and I already regard Virginia as a daughter." He looked thoughtfully toward the court, where Giles and Virginia were finishing their set. "What a charming couple! Young, spirited, both richly endowed by nature, ingenuous, for Giles is as much of a boy as when he was in Eton, Manning. Think of what the future holds in store for them! And they love one another, although it is doubtful if they have actually discovered it; when they do, I imagine that the awakening will put the ripening touch upon their perfect youth."

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Manning nodded absently; he was thinking with inward satisfaction that the income of the future Lady Maltby would doubtless exceed the revenues of this fair estate, and that this was largely due to his wise management. He had forfeited much of his youth to bring this about; had sacrificed much of his education; most pleasures to which he was entitled, and, since his seventeenth year, had applied himself to wresting a great fortune from the Carolina muck. He was satisfied with the result; there were no regrets.

Virginia and Giles had finished their set and were coming toward them. Sir Henry and Manning arose. Giles walked to where his blazer was lying, for the air was cool and he was overheated. Then he turned and came toward the others, and at the same moment Virginia, who was chatting with Sir Henry, turned to Giles with some joking reference. Manning had never seen his sister so radiant. The exercise, the sun, and the sharp air had brought the rich color into her cheeks, slightly disarranged the mass of her hair, which was black, but with a color in it which one could appreciate but not describe.

Her hazel eyes were alight, lips carmine, every feature animated. The collar of her flannel shirt waist was unbuttoned, sleeves rolled to the elbow, and she stood well forward, alert, strong, supple—the winner of the games of ancient Greece, awaiting her chaplet. Manning glanced at her with a swift throb of his keenest emotion, pride; he looked at Giles, then turned his eyes away, for he saw in that one swift scrutiny that the moment of the man's awakening had come.

It was in that psychological moment when all things

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being in their due and proper relations the precipitate was crystallized. Giles looked, the hour struck, the key turned, the bolt was shot. He had left the court as a friend; an instant, a look, and the friend had stepped aside to make way for the lover. It is sometimes so that these things occur, and if they follow any law it is one which never can be formulated. Virginia saw the look, paused in her query with parted lips and hazel eyes filled with startled inquiry, and then for her, too, the veil was raised; in that same instant she had read the Cause. The color swept into her oval face, suffused the straight, round neck; she smiled, the clear eyes softened, darkened, grew humid. She turned swiftly to Sir Henry, and with some swift impulse 'kissed him lightly on the cheek.

"Now I must go and dress," she said breathlessly, and fled away across the lawn; but looked back over her shoulder, smiling as she ran.

CHAPTER II

ARISTIDE DESSALINES

I WILL pole you down to the old milldam," said Giles, "and then you can get out and walk along the edge of the slide and try a cast into the pool below. I have taken some nice ones from there when the water is high, as it is just now. You see, they get close under the bank on the west side, because there is such a rush of water coming down that it makes an eddy where they get shelter."

"How can we get back?" asked Virginia. "Surely you can't pole against such a strong current."

"I could," replied Giles, "but it would take too long. We will leave the punt down there and walk back across the meadows. It's not much over a mile, because, you see, the river winds."

He placed the pole against the end of the little jetty and with a powerful shove sent the punt well out into the stream which, swollen by the recent heavy rains, was transformed from its peaceful, gentle-flowing quiet into a cataract. The current caught the light punt and whirled it down between flower-covered banks.

"How jolly!" cried Virginia; "it is like running the rapids!"

"You should see it in the spring," said Giles; "it's ripping then. We'll have to shoot into the bank below

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this bend ; there's a nasty spot down stream a bit, an old weir that is just awash when the water's up like this."

"How exciting!" cried Virginia. She leaned back and watched him from beneath her curved lashes, darker than her hair, as he skillfully wielded the long pole, noting in delight the ease with which he handled it. There was to Virginia a fascinating quality in sheer physical strength either of man or beast. She loved to feel the powerful shoulders of a big Irish hunter working under the saddle as she rode ; she liked to watch the tug that came on the traces of a heavy drag as a strong four breasted a sharp rise ; she reveled in the leap of a shell under the oars of a lusty eight ; there was something primitive in the exultation with which physical strength inspired her.

Since the week before, when she had fled from the tennis court, there had come between the two a new and odd restraint, a strange shyness on Virginia's part ; an awkward embarrassment from Giles. Each realized the changed relations. It was for Giles to explain it, but he was lacking, not in courage, but in self-assurance. He appreciated that he was in love as much as it could be appreciated by a man for whom its course had always run smooth, and it filled him with a joyful misery, for he could not understand the possibility of a man like himself arousing any deeper sentiment than friendship in a woman of Virginia's talents. Her look had told him nothing ; it spoke in a language which he did not understand, and each time it was recalled with a different interpretation.

Then it had rained for a week, and they had been shut up in the house, and grown fretful and doubtful

and unhappy, and were worse friends than ever before in the most wretched moments of misunderstanding, because there had been present an odd new element of constraint. In a drawing-room Giles would have told his love like a schoolboy attempting to recite a half-learned piece of elocution. He needed the sky over his head and the ground under his feet and the strain of many pounds on his strong muscles. He realized this, but now that such conditions were about him, to talk of love seemed an insult in the face of friendship, so he bent the punt pole to the point of breaking, and felt unhappy and wishful to go ashore and tear up a tree by the roots. Then perversity settled on Virginia and as they glided swiftly on the current for perhaps a furlong with no word spoken, she grew suddenly vexed. Giles was stupid; donkeys were strong; he was bored, no doubt, and in her presence. She was divided between resentment and a strange new shyness which grew as they drifted on in silence, and finally became quite insupportable. She looked away from Giles, toward the shore, and presently discovered that there were many wild flowers growing near the bank.

"Please land me here!" she said imperiously; "I want to gather some of those flowers."

"Oh, I wouldn't bother with them now, Ginny," said Giles, inadvisedly, his mind intent on the fish.

"May I not gather some flowers if I like?" asked Virginia sharply. Giles stared at her in bewilderment.

"Of course, Ginny," he answered, surprised; "but I will land you higher up, as I don't care to cross the river so close to the weir; it's just below this bend."

"What is the danger?" asked Virginia coldly.

"There's no danger, but if we were to be swept down against it we'd have trouble to get clear of the thing; the current would jam us up against it." He thrust the punt to the other bank of the stream, shoving the bow against the turf which lined the water's edge.

"It is quite wet," said Giles. "Let me get them for you." He stepped ashore and made his way along the side of the steep bank.

Virginia, left alone, vexed and angry more with herself for her petulance, was suddenly seized by one of the mad caprices to which she was sometimes a victim. With the willful intention of provoking Giles, she picked up the punt pole and shoved the boat a few yards from the bank. Although familiar with the art of handling such craft, she had not properly estimated the force of the current; before she realized it, the stern of the punt was being swung swiftly down stream. Startled, she decided to forego her pleasantry, but discovered, when she tried to arrest her course, that the water was far stronger than she. A swifter eddy caught the boat, turning it completely about, while at the same moment she drifted clear of the bend and saw a hundred yards below a forbidding line of stakes through which the current was setting swiftly.

Abreast of her, on the bank, Giles was gathering the flowers, his back turned to the river.

"Giles!" she called, frightened and forgetting her pride.

Giles took in the situation at a glance; he saw that the current was setting away from his side of the stream.

"Push straight across to the other bank!" he called.

Virginia, now thoroughly alarmed, tried her best to

follow his directions; she pushed vigorously, but in the middle of the stream, where the water ran deeper, the end of the pole found the smooth surface of a flat stone; as she threw her weight downward, the pole slipped, the punt shot ahead, and the next instant she was struggling in the water.

Giles was in the stream at almost the same instant. Virginia could swim a few strokes, enough to keep her afloat until Giles reached her; the danger lay in the obstruction to which the current was rapidly bearing her, the old, dilapidated, deep-water weir; a sort of fence built out into the stream and constructed of a framework of stakes joined by rough planks, the whole woven together by a thatch of brush. It had been built originally as a fish trap, the design being to lead the fish into a pen built upon the principle of a flytrap, but it had long before fallen into decay, until all that remained were the stakes and a framework of water-logged planking. As the river was swollen the upper stringpiece was just awash, and it was impossible to tell what might be underneath; along this upper barrier there was caught a mass of drift-wood—broken limbs, with fragments of the original brushwood filling and other detritus.

After her first plunge Virginia floated easily, the air in the folds of her dress buoying her up so that she had no difficulty in keeping her head above the water. When Giles reached her they were not more than thirty yards above the weir, toward which they were being borne with all of the force of a swift current; and as Giles looked ahead and saw the black water swirling into the mass of *débris*, a chill, not of the river, which was cold enough, struck deeply at his heart.

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"Catch my shoulder!" he gasped. Virginia obeyed and pushed the hair from her eyes with her free hand. Giles, cool and resourceful in moments of active danger, saw that it was futile to waste his strength in an effort to swim clear of the obstruction; he saved it all for the struggle ahead. He looked at Virginia, and she smiled at him encouragingly; a pale, wet, and somewhat frightened smile, but full of pluck and confidence.

Then they struck. At the first shock Giles was almost sucked under the weir by the weight of water, and, planting his foot on the edge of a broken plank, struggled to hold his head above the surface. The strain was terrific; and, even while afraid to shift his position, he realized that he could not maintain it long. He knew, of course, that if he could manage to get under the weir his danger would be over, as the current would then float his body from, instead of against, the obstruction, and so enable him to get upon the upper beam and lift Virginia up after him. But the current had swept the girl's skirts between the open spaces of the planks in such a way as to hold her fast, and Giles was afraid to ease his hold for an instant, lest she be drawn down and entangled under the surface.

He groped below with his free foot, but although the rotten structure was full of crevices he could find none large enough to let him through, and he knew that should he try and fail the weight of the water would hold him jammed against the stakes.

As Giles realized the fatal helplessness of their position there swept over him something of the old Berserker madness, transmitted to him through a strain of viking blood; a mighty rage and refusal to accept his doom.

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With an extreme effort he managed to shift his hold; then, gripping the slippery beam beneath Virginia's arm, he began to haul his way, hand over hand, along the weir by the sheer output of physical force opposed to that of the stream. Ten feet, perhaps, he gained in this way, bruised against projecting snags, torn and cut and buffeted, but fighting stubbornly for every inch. Perhaps by virtue of indomitable will coercing an unblemished physical machine he might have fought on so to the end of the obstruction and won his way clear; it is impossible to fix a limit to human endurance when the body is sound and the mind refuses to accept defeat. Had it been purely a matter of endurance one cannot say; but suddenly a plank beneath the water against which he had braced his foot gave way and before he could get a fresh foothold both legs were swept into the aperture and held as if in a vise, by the suction of the stream.

With this the calmness of despair settled upon Giles; he could not move, could scarcely support the strain necessary to hold his own and Virginia's head above the water. He realized that it was the end. It seemed to him that the day grew suddenly dark, and for the first time the icy chill of the water struck deeply into him. He turned his wild eyes to the girl who was whipped against the side of a rotten spile like a marsh lily gathered by the flood.

"Virginia," he gasped, "awfully sorry, but it's all— all up! My fault . . . darling——"

Her pallid face was almost against his own, but all that he could see were her great hazel eyes staring at him appealingly. She was bewildered—could not understand—her trust in the invincibility of his strength was so

entire; she had felt safe from the moment in which she felt the first strong clutch of his hand; then, as she searched his face in vain for the promise of safety and found none there, it seemed as if she suddenly realized. She tried bravely to smile; her voice came in a sob.

"Giles . . . kiss me, dear——"

He leaned toward her and pressed his wet face to hers; he had always kissed her at parting, but this kiss was different, and seemed to inspire him with a fresh strength; he lifted his voice in a wild, husky-throated cry for help.

There came from the bank a deep-voiced, resonant hail. Tightening his grip upon Virginia, Giles writhed around against the stakes which were cutting into his flesh.

"Dessalines!" he gasped.

Virginia, looking over his shoulder, wondered if her senses were becoming vague. On the farther bank there stood a towering figure who, even as she watched, threw down a fishing rod he held in his hand and rushed to the brink of the steep bank; at a point where it jutted abruptly over the black, swirling water he loomed for an instant against the sky, then his great frame hurtled through the air and struck the stream with a crash which rose above the singing in her ears, and, even at that moment, numbed as her senses were from the chaos of wild impressions, Virginia was startled to see, as he towered above them, that the face of the man was as black as the shadows in the deep pool beneath.

Her next clear consciousness was of a fierce, black, scowling face beside her own and a mass of sooty, kinky hair from which the water dripped as from an oiled

fabric, so that neither skin nor hair seemed wet. A gorillalike hand closed about her shoulder in a grip which made her scream with pain; the next moment she was lifted bodily from the water and flung across the weir. She grasped a stake and clung to it, looking back with terror; Giles had disappeared.

"Giles!" she gasped. "Save Giles!"

"He has sunk," came the deep-toned answer in a voice which seemed to boom up from the river's bed. "I will get him! Don't fear."

The water closed over the huge black head, with its close, kinky hair; a moment later she caught the flash of Giles's white face as it shone for an instant beneath the surface; beside him there appeared the black one. Giles seemed to rise, *did* rise, an inert mass, and rolled face downward across the beam to which she clung. How it happened Virginia could not have told, but as she threw her arm about Giles's head she saw that the force which had propelled him lay in a Titan hand which seemed to envelop his whole shoulder and a bulging bar of ebony from which the light serge sleeve was ripped.

"Wait a moment," rumbled the deep voice, "and we will get to the shore." The voice was low and rich, vibrant, resonant, magnetic. It filled the ears in a satisfying way, compelled confidence, utter and absolute. It was un-English in tone and accent, and there was a purring roll to the "r" sounds; the girl noticed this, but her thoughts were for the moment drowned in her senses.

The negro twisted himself about; a great, black, sinewy hand seemed to wrap itself about the head of a stake beside him, the other gripped the slippery edge of the upper beam until the fingers sank deep into its slimy

coat; there came a sound of tearing and splintering, the upper part of the stake was twisted bodily from the beam, the long, rusted spikes protruding from its end giving evidence of the power which had wrenched it loose; its splintered lower fragment, as it rose, showed where it had been torn bodily away.

"Good!" said the voice, "that is better; now I can get through."

Again the black head sank, to reappear a moment later on the down-stream side of the weir.

"Now let me have him," rumbled the deep voice. "My word, but this water is cold—" Two great arms, disproportionately long, reached for Giles's inert frame and drew him gently into the water.

"If madam will now place her hand upon my shoulder——"

"But you cannot swim with us both!" cried Virginia.

The answer was a quick flash of two even rows of glittering white teeth; a flash so quick and dazzling and unexpected that she was startled, even while fascinated.

"Madam is not so heavy—" The coaxing voice was such as one would use to reassure a frightened child. "It is most necessary to make haste."

Virginia glanced at Giles, then with a shudder slipped back into the swirling water. For a moment she clung to the beam, away from which the trend of the current carried her; then, with a gasp, her hand fell upon the shoulder of the black, and it seemed to her as if she had placed it upon a corrugated iron post.

"Cling to my coat—" came close in her ear, in what seemed the gurgle of the river. Beneath the light fabric she could feel the massive muscles swell and harden; the

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water trickled past her face, Giles's body floated against hers, his head was awash, but the face was turned upward, clear of the water's rim.

Soon the beat of the great engine ceased. Dessalines arose; Virginia's feet sank and touched the ground; she arose to find herself chest deep. One of Dessalines' arms was thrown about Giles; the other he reached to the support of Virginia, but she edged away with a sudden shrinking. She was dimly conscious of an agonizing pain in her shoulder; then the river seemed to arise and flow about with an odd circular motion, the light grew dim, the heaviness left her limbs, and she sank softly into oblivion.

When she recovered she was lying on the sward with the sun blazing into her face; she stared at the sky; then turned her head weakly, and, with no clear perception of the spectacle, watched the negro who was kneeling at Giles's side, rhythmically moving his arms up and down. As she watched inertly, Giles's eyelids quivered, opened, and she saw the flash of his deep-blue eyes.

CHAPTER III

NIGHT AND MORNING

FENWICK TOWERS was plunged in the deep sleep of the still summer night. Virginia was roused by a growing physical distress from the rest of those thin moments when the night pales before the false dawn.

Her mind awoke refreshed, to hark back on the trail of recent events. Very carefully, step by step, she reviewed the details of the accident, bringing each picture before her eyes by virtue of her too vivid imagination, vigorously active when all else was at a pause. She examined her actions, her emotions, as one would dissect a daisy, willfully slowing the mental process at such points as demanded closer scrutiny. All at the time had been so confused; now at this breathless hour of the night, with mind refreshed and body inert, and not even the ticking of a clock to distract a fancy, it became so startlingly vivid. She saw Giles and herself pressed against the weir, she saw the haggard look of his eyes and heard the brave words, "My fault, . . . awfully sorry" She felt his wet kiss on her lips and the warm glow which had defied the chill of the river swept through her veins. This was sweet, and she dwelt upon it, letting her fancy run into devious bypaths. A week before on the tennis court she had felt the awakening of her love, and now it seemed to rise and gather strength and beauty

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and then . . . into the sun-laden atmosphere of all these charming thoughts there rushed a great disturbing apparition; a sable *génie* summoned by a thoughtless act, and she shrank with a sigh from the presence of the African as he had first rushed into her life; his great somber image looming against the sky, his bestial features scowling with the effort of his struggle with the river as an animal would snarl and gnash at the bars of his cage; his ebony visage close beside her face, the sooty, kinky hair brushing her cheek. She saw the great hands and heard the ripping of the stake as he tore it from its place, and saw again the flash of the white teeth and the twitch of the flat nostrils as he drew taut the massive muscles to take the terrific strain. The sheer force, the appalling physical might of the action thrilled her, set her heart pounding, sent the blood through her veins, quickened her breathing, and then, as her mind reviewed the picture, the muscles of her own arm contracted in sympathy and with the action she cried out from a sharp stab of pain.

Her disquiet was not entirely psychic; her shoulder was extremely tender to the touch, and the slightest movement of the arm painful. Wishing to examine the cause of her distress she slipped out of bed and stepped into the corridor where there was a hall lamp burning before a mirror. In front of this Virginia drew back the sleeve of her nightgown and was not long in discovering the source of her suffering.

Just below the shoulder, against the creamy white of her arm, were four blue-black impressions; on the under surface there was another, where the powerful thumb had crushed into the flesh; the prints were

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slightly raised and so tender that the slightest touch was agonizing.

The sight recalled vividly the power with which the huge negro had torn her from the grip of the flood and thrust her across the beam. She knew that Giles's strength was far beyond the average, yet this Haytian had done with ease what Giles, even in the desperation of the moment had never thought to attempt; the reflection of this thrilled the girl and for the instant swept away the horror inspired by the imprints upon her arm. She held back the filmy sleeve and looked long at the disfigurements; fascinated, magnetized, spellbound, staring with flushed cheeks, luminous eyes almost yellow as the pupils contracted against the glare of the lamp, and then, suddenly, the reaction came; the revulsion, the horror at thus wearing the mark of this negro. Shivering, she crept back to bed where for a long time she lay struggling with the all but irresistible impulse to steal back into the hall and stare at those frightful marks. At last she fell asleep.

Daylight dispelled the black *aura* of the night. Virginia descended to find that Giles, according to his character, had given a modest account of his part in the accident, cloaking all references to the foolish caprice which had caused it and making no mention of his own plucky efforts, but dwelling at great length upon the cool courage shown by the girl. Of course, Dessalines was the hero of the adventure and received the warmest praise, but Virginia had an uncomfortable feeling that Manning's praise was less unstinted than that of the others.

As Virginia entered the breakfast room Sir Henry was reading a note which had just arrived from Dessa-

lines; a graceful, well-worded message in which the Haytian expressed the hope that Miss Moultrie and his friend Giles had suffered no ill effects from the accident; he expressed also a sincere gratitude to the wise Providence which had directed his steps toward the scene of the accident, and ended by regretting that an engagement, demanding his presence in town that afternoon, alone prevented his calling in person.

"A very gentlemanly note," commented Sir Henry. "You say that he is quite black, Giles?"

"Quite. But I fancy he's no end of a swell in his own country; he is a *Count* Dessalines; Dessalines, you know, was the liberator of Hayti, the George Washington, the Bolivar, and Aristide is, I think, a descendant. He has plenty of money; in fact, he told me once that he was very rich. Free-handed chap—no idea whatever of economy—lives like a prince; had ripping apartments at Oxford, and he has a French man servant. . . ."

"A *white man*?" asked Manning sharply.

"To be sure. A little spadger of a Frenchman . . . looks like a crow, but as bright as they make 'em; seems to spend most of his time in admiring Aristide. What?"

"*Br'r'r'gh!*" Manning arose quickly and walked to the window. Virginia was the only one who caught a glimpse of his face, and although what she saw there was not pleasant it found echo in herself. The idea of a white man, no matter of how low a caste, ministering to the needs, the bodily needs, of a negro was forcefully repellent. As a type, a magnificent animal, a laborer sweating beneath a burden which would crush most men, or covered with the muck of the field and laboring perhaps half naked beneath the lash of an overseer, the great Hay-

tian would have been magnificent, inspiring as a creature of wondrous physical might; he would be a feast for the eye of the artist, the sculptor, the athlete, the anatomist—but sleek, well fed, in fine linen, well groomed, and that through the efforts of a white man, lolling back upon rich upholstery—in such a setting he became obnoxious, odious, repellent. Though he had saved her life and Giles's a hundred times he could be like nothing but a great black spider in a silken web thrown from the calyx of a lily. The thought of it made her a trifle ill.

“Odd,” thought Virginia, “that the others do not see it so.” For the second it made her feel a shade differently toward Sir Henry and Giles. Her unpleasant fancies were cut short by the entrance of Lady Maltby. Giles sprang to greet her.

“Hullo, mumsey!” He drew out her chair, arranged her footstool, dropped the shade a trifle to screen the sunlight from her eyes. One would have judged Giles's mother to be an elder sister; she was but eighteen years his senior, and looked half of that, if in a gay mood when one did not observe the thoughtfulness of her clear, blue eyes, and the tiny lines forming at the corners of mouth and eyes. Her greatest charm was perfect femininity; with her, instinct supplanted reason; personal liking endowed its fortunate object with all virtues and antipathy found not a single one. She was finely made, well contained, pretty as a *débutante*, warm hearted, and a fierce hater for perhaps five minutes. Giles resembled her in height, fullness of limb, complexion, and they had the same sapphire eyes. He was however far less subtle.

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"Thanks, boysie." Her eyes shone upon him affectionately. She turned to Virginia.

"How do you feel, dear? . . . I went in to look at you twice during the night but you were sleeping like a baby. Do you feel quite yourself?"

"Quite, thanks," answered Virginia.

Lady Maltby turned to Manning. "What are we to do with this young lady, Manning? When she was last here she got herself run away with while riding one of Giles's hunters; this time they would both have been drowned had it not been for that magnificent young Frenchman or African or Haytian— What determines the nationality of a West Indian?" she added helplessly.

"In the present case it is a negro to whom we are under obligation," replied Manning; "a Haytian negro." His tone was of its usual cool evenness, nevertheless Giles flushed, Sir Henry looked vexed, and Virginia was disturbed.

The Maltbys knew nothing of Manning's color prejudices beyond a vague idea that the people of his State had always resented the freedom of their slaves, and indifferently classed the negro with the lower animals. They would not have accredited Manning with these views, however, believing that as a man of the world he must necessarily be above local prejudices.

"But should he be regarded as a negro," replied Lady Maltby, "any more than you an Englishman or I a German because we are both Anglo-Saxon?"

"It is not a question of nationality, Lady Maltby," said Manning. "It is simply a matter of race. Would you consider that three generations of unmixed Chinamen born in England could produce an Englishman?"

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"At any rate," replied Lady Maltby, "it makes little difference what he is, Manning; I am sure that we are all profoundly grateful to him nevertheless. You will certainly call upon him, will you not?"

"I intended to do so," replied Manning, "but we have just received a note from him saying that he has gone up to London."

"I am sorry; I should have liked the opportunity of thanking him myself."

"You will see him at the cricket match on Saturday, mumsey," said Giles. "Jack Carter and I have made him promise to help us out; his batting's the only thing that can pull us through without disgrace. The C. C. C.'s are regular wonders this year. They've Langdon and D'Arcy and Penrhyn and Roberts—cracks all. There will be five thousand people to see that match—What?"

In the absorbing interest of the coming match, Dessalines was for the moment forgotten and the hour passed pleasantly. Later in the forenoon Virginia and Giles rode together.

As they cantered through the park Virginia noticed that Giles was deeply preoccupied; he was a good talker, in a broken *staccato* way, but this morning he seemed nervous and ill at ease.

"How do you feel after your ducking?" asked Virginia.

"Tiptop."

"Why are you so quiet? Frightened at the thought of the match?"

"In a regular blue funk," he answered absently.

"You don't act as if you were. I'm afraid you're not feeling very fit after your drowning."

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"Fit as a fiddle!" said Giles with labored heartiness. "Barring my fright at the thought of the game. You see, here's this chap D'Arcy—proper demon—one can hardly see the ball, and as for Roberts—oh, I say!—What?"

"Giles," said Virginia severely, "really, I'm ashamed of you; I never would have believed that you could be afraid of anything—and you are getting into a perfect panic!"

"That's the beastly part of it," replied Giles composedly. "It's the suspense; never used to bother me when I was playing right along on the 'varsity; used to like it, rather. It's just that boulder D'Arcy; I've seen him in all of the papers and heard every one singing his praises and all the rest of it."

"No," said Virginia, "it's not that. It's because all of the people whom you've known from childhood are going down to watch you; if it was a strange audience you would not care tuppence; but you will forget about it when you get on the field with the bat in your hands."

Giles stared moodily at his horse's ears. The sun was high and warm; the road wound under the lee of a hill which shut off the breeze; below them ran the river, the bank fringed with its willow copses.

"Let's walk down to the river," said Giles abruptly. "It's too hot to ride, don't you think?"

Virginia glanced at him quickly, then her long lashes swept down to screen the hazel eyes, while her breath came fast. Although she had felt subtly that there were other reasons than the coming match to account for Giles's nervousness, the consciousness had not been formed in her mind.

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Giles slipped from his horse, then turned to swing her to the ground. Virginia was shocked at the pallor of his face. He led the horses to a tree near the roadside. Virginia stood and waited and switched nervously at the daisies with her riding crop.

They walked in silence down the flower-strewn slope, passed through the fringe of willows, and reached the grassy bank of the stream.

"Do you feel as if you would rather not see it again so soon, Virginia—this old river?" There was an odd tremor; a quality in his voice quite new to her and one that set her heart to beating wildly.

"No, Giles, if it did nearly drown us, I love the river—because—because—" Her low voice faltered. There was a moment of silence, while both looked down into the cold black water as it swirled and eddied on its course. Each was thinking, not of the icy plunge, nor the narrow escape of death, but of something else; something which had happened when all hope seemed drowned in the icy water round about; something which had seemed so much greater and stronger and more enduring than the lives upon which their holds were slipping.

A wave of tenderness swept over Virginia, dimming her eyes, clearing her heart of all shyness. She raised her eyes quickly; they met Giles's—just for an instant—and then she was in his arms, clasped on his broad chest with a force which stifled her breath, while her flower face was crushed to his.

CHAPTER IV

THE CRICKET MATCH

THE morning of the day set for the cricket match was one of unusual beauty; its charm, however, was scarcely appreciated by Giles, who, as captain of the Gentlemen's Team, was heavy laden with the sense of his responsibility. This nervousness was unwonted but not unnatural; a defeat before ten thousand strangers would be far less difficult to support than one in the presence of a hundred friends, and it seemed to Giles that every person whom he had ever known was interested in the match.

Fenwick Towers was filled with friends from town, and when, to escape the exhortations coming from all sides, Giles walked moodily down to the stables, the grooms, who were polishing the drag, paused long enough in their work to remind him that the honor of the county rested within the swing of his arms. Giles was heartily glad when the dogcart whirled up to the door to carry him to the field.

Virginia went with the party on the drag. They reached the grounds not many minutes before the teams ran out upon the field, and, at sight of the vast crowd already assembled to see the match, Virginia was suddenly afflicted with an odd little quiver beneath the bunch of violets pinned to her bosom; a flutter which made her breath come quickly, and produced a queer sensation of

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faintness and exhilaration combined. There was a thrill of pride in the sudden thought that Giles was at the head of it all, the central point for the focus of excited attention from the hundreds of spectators.

There is probably no quality in a man which so stirs a woman as a strong, active part played in the presence of many people. A dominant will, dominant brain, dominant body gives to an action which is mediocre when performed alone an inspiring force when witnessed by an admiring throng. The stage hero, in the military drama, who staggers before the footlights grasping a tattered property flag, is more admired by the women who watch him than is the man who plays the real part and of whom they read from afar. Yet this is natural, for most hero worship is founded on actual tradition. In the present case Giles, with his yellow hair and blue eyes and sturdy figure and the sun flashing from the cricket bat which he held in his hand, represented to Virginia the leading character and seemed the reincarnation of some Anglo-Saxon ancestor who had stepped forth, sword in hand, at the head of his chosen band to repel the invader.

To-day the invader was the famous Cherrystone Cricket Club, a team which had made its name dreaded throughout Great Britain. To repel this enemy, Giles had carefully selected a team from the crack players of the counties Kent and Surrey, chiefly ex-'varsity cricketers. This team had played together in but two uneventful matches where the scores had been so ridiculously in their favor as to seem unsportsmanlike. The result had been a challenge to the famous C. C. C.'s, but at the eleventh hour one of the strongest players on the Gentle-

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men's Team had with shocking bad taste become incapacitated through an accident and Giles was in despair of filling his place. Like an inspiration there had come the thought of securing Dessalines, who at first demurred, but finally consented to play. Although the Haytian had never cared for athletics, he had at times played cricket, and it was said that his aptitude for the game, especially his batting, was quite phenomenal.

Virginia knew nothing of the technicalities of cricket; Giles had frequently attempted to elucidate the game to her, but like many clever women Virginia seemed singularly obtuse regarding the details of a sport. What appealed to her was the spectacle as a whole—the field, the teams, the eagerness, the quick, sudden action, the enthusiasm of the spectators. All she required was to be told, from time to time, who was ahead, and, in a general way, how much, and if the score was very uneven she invariably sympathized with the loser, no matter who. Her personal interest was the result of picking out certain players whose style and general bearing pleased her and following the fortunes of these with enthusiasm regardless of the side upon which they played.

Shortly after the Maltbys' drag arrived at the field the teams came on. The visitors were greeted with polite, if somewhat perfunctory, hospitality; but when Giles and his men trotted out from the pavilion the spectators burst into a yell of enthusiasm; then, before the cheering had died away, there was a sudden hush and simultaneously all eyes were focused upon a single sinister figure.

In the rear of the Gentlemen's Team there came a great ebony giant, a colossus he seemed compared to the

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others, some of whom were big men yet looked like children beside the massive, huge-boned, heavy-jointed figure of the black. The hush of wonder fell upon the spectators as their eyes followed this prodigy. Among the clear, fresh faces about him, his savage, sable features contrasted with appalling oddity; among the bare heads, with hair flashing in the sunshine, his heavy-boned African skull, the dome of which was covered with close, kinky, lusterless wool, seemed of a bizarre and forbidding brutality. When presently, in answer to some friendly greeting, he smiled with a startling flash of white teeth, and the great, flat-featured face lighted with unmistakable good humor, the spectators experienced a sense of relief, then laughed with him, and upon the instant he had become the favorite.

The game began, and Virginia, though utterly ignorant of the meaning of each play, found no difficulty in following its fortunes from the exclamations of those about her.

From the very start it was painfully evident that the Gentlemen were outclassed, yet so plucky were their efforts and so cheerful their demeanor in the face of a rapidly progressing defeat, that their friends watched in growing sadness but not in disappointment, while the visitors, who appeared, as Virginia's companion said, to have "collared the bowling," piled up the runs rapidly.

Before long Virginia ceased to ask the score; the details were too harrowing. The Gentlemen played well, but ineffectively. Virginia found a quality of pathos in their cheerful persistence, but even more pathetic to her was the quick eagerness with which the spectators welcomed each plucky effort, no matter how

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unavailing; she soon became more anxious for the Gentlemen to win for the sake of these people who so believed in them than for any personal interest of her own.

"Will they never get them out?" she asked, despairingly, of the man beside her.

"They've got one more—" he began, and then something happened. A ball flew from the batter and Virginia, watching it apathetically as it soared far out to the deep field, saw all at once ahead of it a great black figure which spanned the sward in long catlike bounds, and as the ball seemed hanging high above its head, it leaped, leaped like a great black panther with a circular sweep of the big, loose-knit body. A black arm swept upward, a huge hand met the heavy impact of the ball, the flight of which was ended. The visitors were out.

For a moment the spectators were too astonished to cheer; the feat seemed incredible, almost diabolic. The ball had looked twice the height of the man's head, and might have been, but they had no conception of the spring in the bowed legs and the abnormal length of the African arm.

The Gentlemen went to the bat and Virginia watched with bated breath, but it soon became evident to her, inexperienced as she was, that they were making but a poor showing. She turned to Sir Henry.

"Why doesn't Giles bat?" she demanded impatiently. "They say that he is so clever at it."

"There he goes now," replied Sir Henry, without taking his eyes from the field. Virginia turned in time to see Giles swing manfully at a swift ball, but the next moment to her amazement he turned and walked de-

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jectedly away while another man came to take his place. She could scarcely believe her eyes.

"Why was that?" she cried furiously. "I saw that wicket keeper tip off the bale himself."

"Stumped him," said a moody voice behind her. "Giles stepped outside his crease."

Virginia turned quickly and it was several moments before she could see the field again through the tears dancing in her eyes. Her sympathy now was all for Giles; she could guess what his feelings were to have thus failed at the critical point. A voice from the ground beside the drag roused her.

"Look. . . . Look there! Gad! But isn't he a brute!"

Virginia winked the moisture from her eyes and glanced at the field; as she did so a murmur rolled around among the spectators and then broke into a cheer. Des-salines had gone to the bat; the beautiful catch which he had made in the previous inning, together with the confident and cheerful air with which he now carried himself in the face of defeat, had inspired the dejected spectators with new hope.

The Haytian was a grotesque figure; his creamy-white shirt was open at the collar and showed a neck as strong and supple and ebony as that of a black panther; his sleeves were rolled above the elbows, and, as he alternately tightened and relaxed his hold upon the handle of the bat, the lithe, sinuous muscles glided one over the other in a manner which suggested serpents swimming beneath the surface of a pool. The long, white trousers which he wore did not altogether conceal the slight outward arch of his legs.

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There came a swift ball, but quicker than the ball was the downward flash of the great black arms and the glitter of the bat. It was a fearful swing but at the same instant there came a cry from the wicket keeper which was echoed by the umpire and Dessalines was out.

A babel of voices arose; from everywhere among the spectators the same question was being asked and answered.

"What! Why?" cried Virginia wildly. "What did he say? What does L. B. W. mean?"

"Leg before wicket," almost sobbed the man beside her. "*I* couldn't see it. By George, it's all up with them now, I'm afraid."

Virginia watched the innings which followed in the silence of utter despondency, repressing the inclination to cry. It seemed to her, as indeed it did to every one else, that Giles and his team had not only been outplayed but pursued by some malign, occult influence. When in the course of time Giles again went to the bat she watched him with dumb inertia.

This time, however, it appeared that Giles had come to stay. The fighting blood of the Anglo-Saxon which pulses the strongest in defeat, just as that of the Latin gains strength in victory, had risen to confront the situation and before long hope began to creep back into the hearts of the Gentlemen's sympathizers. Then the other man went out and Dessalines stepped forward; his smile was lacking this time, and the black face wore an expression which silenced the spectators.

With Dessalines and Giles the real strife began. Upward, steadily upward, hit after hit, and run after run, the plucky Englishman and his great black colleague

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carried their puny score. Giles batted as he had never done before, while over against him Dessalines opened up his great shoulders and dragged out the ball in tremendous boundary hits such as the field had never seen. The excitement kept pace; from nervous apprehension too fearful to cheer, on through the dawning hope that the disgrace of the defeat might yet be mitigated, on upward through successive fevered stages of hope to frantic wildness at the growing possibility of a tied score. Suddenly Giles went out on a caught fly.

"Is that all?" gasped Virginia. "Is the game over?"

"No! no!" cried her companion. "They've still got a chance! They only need four runs to tie 'em." He groaned. "There's that duffer Dallet going to bat. He's no good!— Look at that! Look! Oh, my word! Now we *are* done for!"

A murmur arose from the tense crowd. A lightning ball from the bowler had struck the handle of the bat and dropped at Dessalines' feet. With a snarl he had flung one hand in the air, then brushed it against his thigh where it left a bloody smear on the white trousers. Then, with such a smothered and inarticulate growl as might come from a maimed bear, he gripped the bat in the uninjured hand and brandished it toward the bowler as if it were a war club shaken in the face of a tribal enemy.

Virginia watched, fascinated and trembling. She saw the ball fly here and there across the field, the swift figures of the runners, a series of rapid plays . . . and then the players seemed to break from their position and mingle confusedly . . . and a frenzied British crowd

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arose and howled as might have howled their savage ancestors as the last of the invaders was driven from the field.

The Gentlemen had won the day!

For a few moments Giles and Dessalines were the nucleus of a yelling mob of lunatics; as soon as he could disentangle himself Giles worked his way across the field to where the Maltby contingent was impatiently awaiting him. Virginia promptly sprang down and embraced him, to the huge approval of the bystanders, and even Manning was enthusiastic.

A shadow fell upon the group; before she looked about Virginia was conscious of the presence of Dessalines. Manning felt it also, but differently . . . as a dog feels the presence of a domesticated wild animal. He had already called upon Dessalines and expressed his obligation; it is probable that this duty was the most difficult which Manning had ever been called upon to perform, but he had gone through it gracefully and in full. The reaction had come to him while leaving, when Dessalines had held his hand for as much as ten seconds and in his deep throaty voice expressed the hope of seeing more of him. Manning had left the place pale and quivering.

Virginia's heart was beating wildly; it was the first time that she had seen Dessalines since the accident. She had written him a grateful letter, and had discussed with Giles the propriety of presenting him with some little token commemorating his great service to them. She had felt that she ought to bid Manning ask him to call, but knew that her brother would never consent to this; she was aware that Manning's antipathy toward the race

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was constitutional, rather than social ; it had slight reference to the former state of slavery or any other conditions governed by circumstance and politics ; it was an inborn, instinctive aversion ; the presence of a negro out of his place, close to him, in bodily contact, filled him with the same savage antipathy inspired in some people by the presence of certain lower animals. To some extent this sentiment obtained among his Carolina colleagues, but in Manning it was abnormally extreme ; he would not permit the ministrations of a negro barber or man servant ; had overcome with difficulty his repugnance to negro house servants. It was an inconvenient weakness, no doubt hereditary. His mother had suffered from it ; Virginia shared it, but, not having been in Carolina since her seventh year, had never developed it to the same extent.

In a wave of repulsion which caught her breath and sucked the blood back into her heart Virginia turned and looked into the face of Dessalines who was standing at her shoulder. There was no change in the sable face ; it might just have arisen from the river, and she could in fancy see the beads of water sparkling on the kinky hair, as a Scotch mist clings to a woolen texture ; the grotesque, flat nostrils, the thick lips, the swift flash of the white teeth as he smiled, the muddy white of his odd bulging eyes, and the black, satiny skin, thin and clear and fine as the film which skims a cup of cocoa ; all vivid, yet no more vivid than it had been when thrown in high light against the void of her imagination.

She tried to speak, to express her congratulations on the victory of the hour, but her quick breathing impeded the flow of words ; Dessalines, seeing her emotion, spoke,

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and at the first beat of the deep organlike voice, those about him paused in their own speech to listen.

"He is a wonderful bat—our friend, Giles, is he not, Miss Moultrie?" said Dessalines, at the same time dropping one great hand upon the shoulder of the Englishman with affectionate familiarity. "Without him what should we have done?" His eyes fell upon Manning; he bowed. "Mr. Moultrie, my compliments," said Dessalines.

Manning bowed, and Virginia saw that his face was a shade paler. Giles wheeled quickly.

"Hello, Aristide! You've met Miss Moultrie, of course. Mother, let me present Count Dessalines. Father, Count Dessalines."

Dessalines, whose head was on a level with the floor of the drag, bowed gracefully and with the suggestion of a Gallic flourish.

"We are so happy at this opportunity of expressing our deep obligation, Count Dessalines," said Lady Maltby earnestly.

"And now he's added to it!" cried Giles, who like most of his class had an inborn dread of a sentimental situation. "First he saves our lives, then he saves the honor of Kent and Surrey."

"I trust that you will do us the honor to call, Count Dessalines," said Sir Henry, who had already called upon the Haytian to express his obligation. The conversation had occurred beyond the earshot of Manning and Virginia who had given way to the pressure of the curious and admiring crowd which was hanging on the heels of Dessalines. Virginia stepped close to her brother.

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"Manning," she said in a low voice, "I beg of you—I implore you to try and hide your feelings! Remember that you are not in Carolina. This man is our social equal here."

Manning turned to her a frozen but furious face. "Virginia! Are you crazy? *Our equal!* You . . . a Moultrie . . . speak of a——"

"But, Manning, think of our obligation! He saved my life . . . Giles's life. . . . Manning, you *must* treat him with respect. . . . You must come with me now while I speak to him." She seized Manning's arm and moved toward the drag.

"Haven't we done all that we can?" demanded Manning, in a low, fierce voice. "*I've* called on him, Sir Henry's called on him, Giles——"

"Manning, I'm ashamed of you!" whispered Virginia furiously. "Can one be too grateful, too appreciative?"

"Come on then," answered Manning passionately. "I suppose that you will want to ask him to call on you next!"

"That is precisely what I am about to do!" cried Virginia.

CHAPTER V

BLACK SHADOWS

FATIGUED by the excitement of the day, Virginia retired early that night. Her sleep was restless; there is a certain kind of sleep less refreshing than actual wakefulness; a condition of subconsciousness in which a leading impression, variously contorted, is passed and repassed before the tired mind. The unwelcome tenant of Virginia's mind was Dessalines.

Repeatedly she fully aroused herself; striving, through the domination of her subjective brain, to bring the cold light of analysis to bear upon the somber-hued fancies which were robbing her rest. After demonstrating the hollowness of the black *aura* cloaking her dreams she would turn resolutely to sleep and forgetfulness, but with waning will and drowsing mental vigilance the disturbing fancies would sneak back stealthily to join in howling chorus—a pack of prairie wolves, scattered by a firebrand. With these there would glide from some abyss a growing series of late, powerful impressions; morbid, exotic, blurred, distorted, like most dream bodies, growing fantastically out of their true shape.

The waking mind unconsciously resists thousands of disquieting elements, as the bodily tissues constantly resist the assaults of myriad bacteria; over the greater part of these mentally irritative elements a natural sleep will spread an obliterating blanket, as a light fall of snow

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smooths the uneven surface of the ground. Let there be some object, larger and more fantastic in design, and the sleep, like the snow, instead of softening the contours, serves only to cloak its true shape; puzzles the mind, the eye, and renders it more sinister for this distortion.

Virginia would waken, fix her mind on cheerful topics, fall into a light sleep and promptly become the prey of the same bizarre fancies differently presented; the constant element was the face of Dessalines; sometimes scowling, sometimes sad, stricken, or perhaps luminous with purposeful strength and dominant action. Certain characteristics were conspicuous: the close, kinky African hair; the broad, low forehead; the wide, flat nostrils; but above all, the black, lusterless skin which had been so striking in the center of hundreds fresh, fair, and glowing.

Yet his had been the one great central figure; not as a curiosity, but *par excellence*, by virtue of strong body and active mind. She felt that if some calamity had occurred, some crisis arisen, he would have been the natural leader; the others would have followed; that his great shoulders would have towered over theirs, his deep, resonant voice have thundered out commands, and the giant frame with its long elbow-bent arms would have hurled men right and left in their execution.

As the night wore on Virginia's fatigue gave way to anger; she rebelled at this domination of her mind; this appropriation of her thoughts by a huge negro. Aside from the proper gratitude which she felt toward a rescuer, she resented this possession; it was not the first time that she had encountered men of this race; she had met them in Paris, in London, at diplomatic functions,

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together with Moors, Turks, Hindoos, and Hottentots, for all she knew. Yet this one great, black, mobile face was mirrored in her mind until the break of dawn, when she fell into a sleep of utter exhaustion.

Four hours later when she awoke, although her first thought was of Dessalines, it was quiet, unemotional; she was bitterly angered at the recollection of her broken night's rest.

Giles was alone in the breakfast room when she entered; she was very glad, not only because she loved him, but because everything about Giles was so healthy that he became a natural antidote for a morbid night. As she entered she found him trying his best to establish hostile relations between two fox terrier pups by taking each by the scruff of the neck and rubbing its head against that of its brother. At her light step upon the parquet floor he started like a guilty schoolboy; the pups, roused to the fighting pitch and suddenly released, rolled over and over, two little snapping, snarling masses of rage.

"Hello!" said Giles, looking up and planting a firm and pacifying foot between the pups. "Good thing you came down, Ginny; got so lonely waiting here for you that I had to start a dog fight . . . what?" He stepped to her side and kissed her heartily.

"Good morning, Giles. Have you been riding?" she asked, looking at his boots. "Why did you not tell me?"

Giles's face fell. "Oh, I say! Would you have gone? I haven't been myself, though. Going to try a new hunter by and by. We'll ride this afternoon, what?"

Virginia looked vexed. "Count Dessalines is coming this afternoon," she said; she felt that she had had almost enough of Dessalines for some time.

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"Bother—so he is." Giles's gratitude was of a practical quality. Had he come on Dessalines struggling in a fish trap he would have tried to save him at any risk to himself, would have done as much for any one; because Dessalines had saved the lives of Virginia and himself he could see no reason why they should give up their ride.

"We can ride early," said he. "Dessalines is coming for tea. If he comes before we get home what's the odds! let him wait. The others can take care of him."

Virginia hesitated; she did not like the thought of leaving Dessalines with Manning, whose sense of duty would compel him to entertain the Haytian at whatever cost.

"I think that we had better wait," she replied.

Giles helped her to breakfast; he poured her tea and Virginia stirred it for several moments in silence.

"Giles," she asked suddenly, "do people often give you the creeps?"

"Well, rather!" replied Giles calmly.

Virginia toyed with her spoon. "When a person gives you the creeps," she asked presently, "do you have an odd craving to watch that person and *get* the creeps?"

"Not much! I want to steer clear of 'em . . . but I know what you mean. It's like listening to a rattling ghost story; and then there are some people who find it rather jolly to look at the blood where some one's just been hurt. Often wondered at it . . . there's my old pointer, Dash; got the finest nose in the world, but he'll go right out and roll in a dead hare . . . Oh, I say, . . . beg pardon! Forgot that you were at breakfast!"

Virginia laughed in spite of herself.

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"There's a chap coming here to-morrow whom you will like, Ginny," said Giles. "A Dr. Leyden; he's a Dutch naturalist, an old acquaintance of pater's; awfully interesting . . . had no end of adventures all over the globe."

"Really?" said Virginia, brightening. "I'm glad. I like that sort. Is he old?"

"Pater's age; you must get some of his tales." He glanced at the clock, then rattled on about his horses.

"Finished?" he asked presently. "Come out and look at the gee-gee; bet you he chucks me off before I'm ten minutes older; Jennings says he's a rank one."

Virginia accompanied him to the stables.

They did not ride in the afternoon; Virginia, on reflection, feared that it might appear ungrateful to be absent when Dessalines called. It was about four o'clock that she looked out of the bay window where she was reading and saw a startling picture for that stately English frame.

Slowly advancing up the avenue, mounted upon a magnificent black horse, came Dessalines. The horse, an enormous animal, conspicuous for its full, arching neck and massive, foam-flecked chest, approached with springing steps, curbed to slowness by the powerful hand of the rider. The bulging, knotted muscles of the charger, aquiver beneath the smooth, glossy skin woven with the swelling veins of the thoroughbred, the wild, eager eye, everted crimson nostrils, all told of a spirit maddened by restraint. As Virginia watched, thrilled at the spectacle of the restrained power, the nervous tension contained in living bodies of such appalling energy, the animal

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caught the bits in his champing jaws and shook them savagely.

Dessalines was the statue of a Numidian king; the great, dominant face, muscular of jaw, haughty, prideful, seemed to proclaim the leader by divine right, the monarch of a virile race, and, as in his charger, the contour of the head, the clear velvet smoothness of the ebony skin indicated the pureness of the savage strain. Whatever he might lack, a glance proved the Haytian to be no mongrel; one would affirm that no vagrant corpuscle of alien blood had found its way into his veins.

He drew nearer slowly, and Virginia could see from the expression of the mobile face that the spirit of strife had entered him; his attitude showed a fierce exultation in his perfect mastery; the great shoulders thrown squarely back, one saw the swell of the pectoral muscles beneath the light coat; the hand, closed on all four reins, seemed to contain the power to tear the horse's jaw bodily from its sockets.

The gravel hissed beneath the twitching hoofs as Dessalines reined in before the door. Virginia heard a plunging step in the hall; Giles's clear voice rang out cheerily.

"Hello, Aristide! Glad to see you." Virginia, watching, saw again the vivid flash of strong white teeth as Dessalines swung his great frame to the ground as lightly as a panther. He was dressed in orthodox riding costume; the boots were of heavier leather than usual and a trifle loose about the legs, which were small in proportion to the bulk of the man; this seeming lack of proportion was augmented by the lack of calf muscle, the bulk of muscle being upon the outer side of the heavy bone, thus

giving a bowed contour displeasing to the eye. The hand not on the bridle hung almost to the knee.

A deep voice rumbled up from the drive. "Good morning, Giles— Look out! Don't get too near that brute, my dear fellow; he's an ugly one to all but myself— Yes, a stallion. Let me ride him to the stables myself— He has already killed one groom." He laid one hand on the pommel and raised himself, rather than vaulted, to the saddle. Strong as was the horse his back appeared to sag. He moved slowly down the drive, Giles walking on the turf at one side. They turned a bend and the tall hedge hid them from view. Virginia turned at the sound of some one entering the room.

"The Ethiopian Giant!" exclaimed Lady Maltby, for it was she. "My dear, did you ever see such a sight in all your life? *There* is a face to haunt one's dreams! Fancy what it must be when he is enraged!"

Virginia stared out across the lawn. "I should like to see him in an amphitheater," she answered abstractedly, "fighting a lion with his bare hands. I suppose that he is the kind they bred for the arena—except that the gladiators were slaves, and this man is sleek and does not look as if he had ever worked with his hands—" She laughed nervously.

"Giles says that he is inclined to be luxurious," replied Lady Maltby, "that is, fond of comforts. Fancy him lolling on a divan . . . among silken cushions of *bleu tendre* while a French *valet de chambre* . . ."

"Oh, don't!" protested Virginia. "Horrible! it couldn't be so! It would be too terrible! It would not be so bad if he were lounging on a couch of flaming scarlet, in a room hung with *portières* of clashing discords,

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and musicians playing out of tune in minor keys, and half-frightened Circassian dancing girls . . .”

“That is what one might expect,” said Lady Maltby, “but it is far from being the case. Giles tells me that he is horribly conventional and very religious.”

“How creepy!”

“Let us go out, my dear,” said Lady Maltby. “Really, there is scarcely room for him in a house! We will have tea in the pagoda.”

On the driveway they met Giles and Dessalines returning.

“A study in black and white,” said Lady Maltby in a low voice. “But I thought that he was very much taller.” Virginia herself was surprised to see that there was no greater disparity in height. Giles was an even six feet, Dessalines three inches taller; Giles was big with a sturdy, well-proportioned Anglo-Saxon girth of limb and body, whereas the massivity of the Haytian was almost grotesque in some of its dimensions, but while of a strange and alien type, was yet not unpleasing in effect. Dessalines could not have greatly exceeded Giles in many of his measurements, yet owing to the comparatively greater size of his huge, bony structures he would have weighed perhaps fifty pounds more; the Haytian’s herculean strength owed its source to this massive ponderance of bone.

The contrast was startling: Giles, with his fair complexion, sunny hair, sparkling blue eyes, seemed a creature of the full day of civilization, while Dessalines appeared to have not yet emerged from the black night of paganism.

Nevertheless they knew that he had given ample evi-

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dence of the ability of the active brain beneath the heavy African skull to more than hold its own with those about him; it was believed that it could emanate ideas worthy of an Anglo-Saxon mind. Virginia reflected that whatever the past history of the race of which he was an exponent, there surely must have been some long-forgotten epoch of enlightenment to have transmitted this intellect through the dark eras which had followed.

"It is a shame to oblige you to stable your own horse, Count Dessalines," said Lady Maltby as they met.

Dessalines bowed. "The fault is mine, Lady Maltby. If one will ride a dragon one must expect to be his own hostler. It is far less trouble to stable the animal than to provide for a widow and a family!"

"Fancy you don't find many mounts up to your weight, old chap," said Giles.

"That is true; *Liberté*, my stallion, is hackney and Percheron; I found him in Normandy, where he was monarch of all he surveyed; no one dared approach him, but . . ." a flash crossed the sable face, "we soon came to an understanding, and since then there has been no difficulty."

"He is a magnificent creature," said Lady Maltby, leading the way to the pagoda, which was on a little knoll in a grove of lustrous birches at the edge of the broad lawn. From this eminence one saw the stately house rising sheer from the close-cropped sward flanked with flower beds, ivygrown on the eastern wing; behind it the park; to the west the sunken gardens running down to the brimming edge of the lake, silver and azure, flecked with swans.

"It is entrancing!" cried Dessalines turning to Vir-

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ginia, "a fairyland, . . . a dream place . . . in all but the harsh, rough climate." His face saddened. "How it could be done in Hayti! What an elysium it might be were it not for the sloth of my people!"

"You shall teach them," said Virginia.

"It is to be my work; but I could never teach them this," he waved his hand toward the fair prospect. "They would not understand—it is not in the Haytian blood; perhaps it is a matter of climate—where nature does so much, man refuses to do anything. Perhaps it is the very harshness of your climate which leads you English to work so hard to beautify your homes." He paused. "Do you know Hayti?" he asked abruptly, turning to Virginia. "It is a near neighbor; Giles tells me you are American . . . but no doubt your knowledge of Hayti is even less than mine of the States." His black features were crossed by a fierce gleam. "I have never been but once in the United States and that was but for a day."

"I have not seen my native country since I was a child," replied Virginia, "and I am ashamed to say that I know absolutely nothing of Hayti."

"It is a savage island lying midway between Cuba and Porto Rico; beautiful beyond description, rich beyond belief; favorable to human well-being by virtue of every God-given natural condition, and yet a country which promises no safety to life or property, because it is a negro republic, and the negro has not yet learned to govern himself or others."

The rich voice ceased. Virginia, glancing at Dessalines' face, was strangely moved; such words from such a source were startling; more so was the calm certainty with which they were delivered.

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"That is why I am here, in England, at Oxford," continued Dessalines. "In Paris one may learn, but for some reason my countrymen return from there demoralized, to the injury of the country and the destruction of their souls." He stared thoughtfully across the delightful prospect which he scarcely seemed to see. His eyes were unfocused, resting on the distance.

"Slavery was a necessity for my race," he resumed, as if talking to himself, "it has lived for so long in the shadow that when given light too suddenly the result is to dazzle the eyes. To-day I am a believer in slavery for my entire race; it is a necessary step to civilization; it is kinder to the negro to lead him to civilization through the valley of the shadow than to knock off his fetters and leave him the victim of his own weaknesses, at the mercy of his own desires. The condition of the slave should be the care of the State; he must be protected from abuse. In my own country slavery no longer exists, in theory, but is it strange, my friends, that a strong, primitive people should be unable to support the extreme degree of a republic—a vote, in the place of leg irons? I ask you, is it not so?"

The note of appeal in the rich voice stirred his listeners. There was a moment's pause.

"But what is the alternative?" asked Lady Maltby.

"A monarchy . . . for a certain number of years. The autocracy of a wise and honest ruler of the same race. Through a monarchy a people might pass from slavery to democracy without the epoch of utter demoralization one sees in the Hayti of to-day."

Giles looked away; he had an uncomfortable sense of having heard this argument on the lips of Dessalines

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many times before, each time amended a trifle, but always couched in terms of flowing eloquence. He doubted that it was entirely original; less that than gathered here and there; pieced, parceled, but always rhetorical. He looked up with a quizzical smile.

"Long live King Dessalines!" he murmured. Virginia, watching the Haytian, saw a swift flash cross the mobile face; a smile full of good humor swept it away.

"Then you shall be British Minister, Giles. Ah, but you would love Hayti reconstructed!" He turned the conversation to a different topic, still monopolizing the bulk of it. Virginia, listening closely, was not long in discovering that she was held less by what he said than his manner of saying it. Afterwards she was surprised at the paucity of ideas transmitted by the man; she could not rid her ears of the vibration of the low, resonant voice, neither could she banish his image from her eyes.

Dessalines' departure was nearly attended by an accident. He was about to mount when one of the grooms stepped forward to take the horse's head; before the man discovered his danger, back went the stallion's ears, the lips were drawn upward, and with a snarl like a dog he had snapped at the man, caught him by the loose shoulder of his coat, thrown him down, and was about to spring upon him when Dessalines' great arm shot out, the thick black fingers closed like a vise upon the lower jaw of the animal; up flew the heavy crop and four blows which seemed enough to splinter the skull fell upon the glossy head. Just for a second Virginia caught a glimpse of the black face; the thick lips were curled up from the white teeth, the flat nose was flatter, with deep lines between it and the cheeks, the forehead wrinkled until the

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low-growing, kinky hair seemed about to touch the brow ; then like a flash it cleared, and the girl wondered if the face she had seen were real.

At the last blow of the crop Giles had winced, for a gurgling moan had come from the staggering horse.

" Oh, I say . . ." he began. Dessalines wheeled ; his face was calm, but there was a lurid light deep in the somber eyes.

" It is a pity," he said. " One does not wish to be cruel, but the brute is very dangerous and it is either that or a bullet."

He mounted with a lithe swing ; Virginia saw a red stain against the black of his hand ; blood was trickling from the mouth of the horse.

" Good afternoón," said Dessalines, bowing from the saddle. He spoke gently to the horse, which moved off down the road. Giles's eyes followed him.

" Gad, what a brute ! "

" Which ? " said Virginia.

" Both," said Lady Maltby under her breath.

CHAPTER VI

DOCTOR LEYDEN

VIRGINIA, my dear," said Sir Henry, "permit me to introduce my old friend, Dr. Leyden." He turned to the scientist. "Miss Moultrie has been for many years our daughter by adoption, Maurits, and she is soon to become doubly so by an even closer tie."

The naturalist bowed. "May your wishes be many and your wants few!" he said to Virginia.

"Thank you, Dr. Leyden," she answered. "There is one less of each now that I have met you."

"That alone is worth coming from the Orinoco to hear," answered Leyden with a flashing smile.

Dr. Leyden, traveler, collector, naturalist, and archæologist, was a man past middle age, but still in the prime of life. He was of medium height; a trifle heavy in build, but possessed of an alertness of motion due to the steady nerve tension of the short, strong muscles. One could scarcely think of him as relaxed; he would be tense, keen, alert, even in sleep. His face was Dutch in type; not of the stolid, square, phlegmatic character which is incorrectly accepted by most people as typical of the Hollander, but the cleanly chiseled, broad-browed, highly intelligent, and strikingly handsome face seen among the nobility of the Netherlands. With Leyden this fineness of feature was rendered more pleasing by the stamp of a

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rugged intellectuality and an ever-present kindliness of expression. The eyes were of a clear blue-gray, and set well apart; the hair and crisp mustache brown, flecked with gray. His skin, from long exposure, was seamed in hundreds of crossed lines and tanned to the color of saddle leather. Virginia had expected to meet an elderly man of physique which bore evidences of the racking effects of extremes of climate, for she had heard Sir Henry mention the fact that Leyden was addicted to chronic malarial fever as the result of multiple exposures; she was astonished to find a man of still youthful appearance and a grade of physical and masculine beauty which would anywhere attract the eye.

Leyden pleased Virginia; his words and courtly way of saying them; his manner, appearance, all aroused her interest; from the first glance he inspired her with friendship, confidence, respect. She was anxious to appear well in his eyes; was desirous of his esteem, yet felt instinctively that his atmosphere was her natural medium; to sum up, they were sympathetic. She felt that she could be entirely natural with him.

"Have you seen Giles, Dr. Leyden?" she asked. "He wished to be told the instant you arrived."

"He has but come from the stables," said Leyden. "I have not seen him; I fancy he is dressing. He will be down directly; it is probable that he knows of my arrival."

Sir Henry laughed. "My dear Maurits," he said, "I see that you are still the same." He turned to Virginia. "You must know, my dear, that Dr. Leyden is a bushman—a tracker—one of those marvelous people who will look at a wisp of straw and tell you that your neigh-

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bor's dog is a mongrel. Now make him tell you how he knows these things."

Leyden laughed; his gray eyes rested for a moment on Virginia's face, met her own, and the girl had a sensation of being photographed.

"It is not necessary to tell Miss Moultrie; her powers of observation are sufficient."

Virginia glanced up quickly, puzzled, interested, and as she looked, her ready faculties gathered the trend of his ideas. They were standing on the turf path which led to the stables; in front of them was a bare spot where the grass was worn away; the ground was moist as a shower had passed in the afternoon. Virginia connected what had been said, glanced down instinctively; her eyes brightened. She laughed softly to herself.

She turned to Leyden. "You know, because here is the print of a man's riding boot coming from the stables; it has come since the rain, and there is a little scratch behind the heels where the rowel of a spur has dragged." She laughed outright and turned to glance at the house. "And you know that Giles's rooms are on this side, because you know how fond he is of pets, and the pigeons are all fluttering around that corner window."

Sir Henry stared. "My word! My dear child——"

"Thank you, Miss Moultrie," said Leyden, "you more than bear me out." His keen eyes rested on her. "If you will permit me to say so, your quickness of perception is extraordinary for a house dweller; you apply these things, the things you see; you apply them to the convenience of your daily life."

"Does not every one?" asked Virginia.

"*Ach*, no! Five senses are not enough to tell some

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people how to distinguish between friends and foes; two are sufficient for you, your sight, your hearing. But come, Miss Moultrie, will you not do us the honor to join us? Sir Henry can not enjoy his *déjeuner* until I have told him the name of a new orchid which he has discovered in his greenhouse, though I suspect it to be from a bulb which I sent him from the Essequibo and of which he has forgotten the existence."

"You had better not tell Guijon that," said Sir Henry with a smile. "I doubt if my slight authority would restrain him from open insult." He led the way toward his elaborate greenhouses.

"I will venture to say," observed Leyden, "that this particular plant is a rare *Phælenopsis* which I found up the Essequibo, on a peculiar expedition I made in the company of a native physician of Georgetown. He had just graduated from Guy's Hospital and was doing some original work in leprosy, and wished to investigate the disease among the Indians and bush negroes, some of whom he proposed to inoculate. The fellow was very intelligent, black as the ace of spades, and finely educated, in spite of all of which an old Obeah doctor got hold of him and convinced him that he possessed a sure cure for the disease which was only efficacious if accompanied by certain rites, incantations, symbols, and such nonsense. It was to me most interesting. Here was a man of European education; as the Americans would say, 'advanced,' skillful in his profession, yet quite amenable to superstition." Leyden laughed softly. "That, you see, was where the African crowded the creature of light; hereditary instincts and impulses jamming the brain, education, freedom of thought into the corner

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while it fed and growled and gluttoned itself. If the degree of his thoughts had been registered and a piece of French glass let into the place occupied by the temporal bone the workings of this freakishly well-convoluted brain could have been no more evident. Ha, ha!" It was a remark rather than a laugh. "It is so with all of these primitive peoples; if one will but wait, the savage will show itself . . . just as one waits for a tiger on the edge of the jungle. It is only a question of time before these things break cover . . . like a boy playing with a diving bottle. . . . You know, Henry, a bottle weighted to its specific gravity plus; it bobs up in time and when it doesn't it stays down for good, and there is the end of the diving bottle and the aborigine, and money thrown into the ditch for an education . . . ha, ha."

Virginia listened, puzzled; the theory she understood of course, but not the man. Leyden appeared genuinely amused at the incident which he had just cited, yet she felt instinctively that he was not a cynic, a scoffer, or a "laughing philosopher." She could not know that with his views the sight of an aborigine aping a *savant* furnished the same amusement as might an ostrich attempting to fly to the top of a palm; it was the effort which amused him, not the failure.

As they walked toward the greenhouses Leyden rambled on lightly, his pleasing voice, with its clean-cut enunciation and faint hint of a foreign, or more properly, polyglot accent, lightly sketching places, people, and things. Virginia listened with keen pleasure; she was too feminine not to be powerfully attracted by the subtle assurance of the winning voice, the mental clearness of the views portrayed from a source of such classic, mascu-

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line beauty. For, when Leyden spoke, the light of his brilliant intellect shone through his clear eyes and his thoughts went home to the listener as if driven on the cold, blue point of a rapier. Virginia was conscious of a sympathy amounting almost to self-obliteration. She was one of those women who are the spoil of the strongest; she might have loved Giles, but a man like Leyden, virile, forceful, gently masterful, could have made her his slave. Virginia was strongest in the face of her enemies.

They reached the greenhouses and found the gardener, a Breton imported by Sir Henry from a *château* famous for its culture of peaches, busily taking temperatures.

"Guijon," said Sir Henry, "this gentleman believes that he can tell us the name of our strange orchid."

The gardener scowled. "It is a waste of the gentleman's time," he replied in guttural English. He was a crabbed, sour-visaged man, with a barrel chest, bent spine, and very bowed legs. For years his position had hung in the balance; an equivalence between high professional skill and lacking respect. "There is no such plant as this; it is a freak, the sport of nature, a bulb dropped by accident through a hole in the basket and possessing a strange form as the result of unnatural conditions. I have hunted through the plates in the library in London; I have shown the rather poor photograph of it which you took, accurately colored by myself, to *savants* in the Botanical Gardens. There is no such plant; I think that I shall call it the *Phalenopsis Guijonis*." He scowled, but this was his habitual expression. No one had ever surprised a trace of amiability

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upon his sour face, far less a smile. His underlings would have fled had they heard him laugh.

Sir Henry looked annoyed; Virginia flushed. Leyden smiled, said a few words in Gaelic; Guijon's features writhed; the eyes of Leyden twinkled, he delivered himself of a volley of guttural words, and Virginia, who had often heard Guijon muttering to himself in his Bigouden Breton as he worked, was amazed, for the quaint inflections of the odd character were all present; one would have sworn that it was the voice of Guijon talking, except that the tones were less explosive. Leyden said a few more words in the same tongue; Guijon answered, his face contorted into strange shapes; Leyden loosed a broadside; Guijon laughed outright. Sir Henry looked alarmed and Virginia was almost panic stricken, but Leyden clapped the griffin on the shoulder and led the way to the orchid.

It was in flower, wonderfully so, with a pale light shimmering up from its livid depths through the raw-tinted, translucent corollary cup; diaphanous as the *pinna* of a girl's ear, flesh-tinted, exotic, poisonous, passionate, it claimed the eye. Leyden bent over it; Virginia did the same and drew back repelled at its stagnant, fetid breath. Insects were struggling in its saliva; it was a vampire plant.

Leyden straightened his back and turned to the gardener, this time speaking in English. "You are right, my friend; it is the *Phælenopsis Guijonis*; I sent the bulb from the Philippines where I bought it from Arthur Brown, the marine painter. He told me that he found it in Basilan, and being unable to identify it had decided that it was a new variety and had named it after himself;

I saw his in flower ; it was not half the size of this, and far less brilliant." He turned to Sir Henry. "When you told me of the orchid I thought it probable that it was the plant which I sent you from the Essequibo, a new variety also ; I called it the *Phalenopsis Leyden-sis*."

Guijon stepped back ; his round, blood-shot eyes reddened by the cheap, muddy sour wines which he swilled daily, fastened on the face of the scientist.

"Gaste ! and you tell me that you are the great Leyden ! . . . the botanist !"

"No," answered Leyden, a touch of austerity in his tone. "I am Leyden the collector ; I know less of botany than I do of beasts, less of beasts than I should."

Guijon bowed ; Virginia listened for the crack of his vertebræ.

"I have read your books," said Guijon humbly. "They are masterly. My greenhouses are honored."

Giles joined them at this moment, and Dr. Leyden greeted him warmly. They returned to the house.

"Dessalines is coming for dinner," said Giles to Virginia. "I thought that I should ask him ; he told me that he might have to leave at any moment."

Leyden caught at the name. "Dessalines . . . Dessalines," he repeated. "A Frenchman ? ah ! Dessalines was the name of the liberator of Hayti."

"He is a Haytian," said Sir Henry. "A young man to whom we are under the greatest obligation. He saved our two children from drowning !"

"So ! You astonish me !" exclaimed Leyden. He glanced quickly from Sir Henry to Virginia.

"Come, Maurits," said Sir Henry. "I wish you to

see my water garden. I will tell you of the incident on the way. Are you two children coming with us?"

"I—I think not. I have some letters to get ready for the post," replied Virginia uncertainly. For some unaccountable reason she disliked hearing the rescue discussed at any time; with the wise, examining eyes of Leyden upon her, she felt that it would be insupportable. She felt a shrinking—a nervousness—the sensation which a woman wears with her surgeon.

Manning was absent, having gone to London; Virginia had a suspicion that he had accepted a rather undesirable invitation to avoid the dinner to which Dessalines was asked.

The day wore on, poisoned for Virginia by disquieting anticipations of the evening. She said nothing to Giles concerning this, but kept him near her. In the afternoon Leyden drove with Lady Maltby; Virginia learned that besides being an old friend he was regularly commissioned by Sir Henry and several of his neighbors who were interested in horticulture, to inspect their gardens and greenhouses and keep them supplied with such plants as he thought would be desirable.

Just before the dinner hour Virginia descended to find the others of the household awaiting the arrival of the guests, Lady Woodville and her sister, Miss Byng, and Dessalines. The two former arrived shortly after Virginia went down. Lady Woodville and her sister, neighbors; the former a widow, the latter a spinster, were unexciting; both handsome, well born, not interesting. It would have been an indignity to have called either pretty; they were useful, as are all such, in chinking the spaces between the larger blocks.

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Virginia, talking to Miss Byng, found herself ill at ease; her eyes flew frequently to the tall clock, her ears were acute to catch a heavy step and the rumble of a deep voice in the hall; she knew precisely how the voice would sound, how its resonant vibration would roll in megaphonic whispers beneath the vaulted ceilings with their ornate pendants of stucco; her hands fluttered.

Glancing up suddenly as the great clock gave its whirring premonition of the hour, her eyes met Leyden's. He was standing near, in conversation with Lady Maltby. Excusing himself, he came to Virginia.

"You are a tiger lily to-night," he said, his perfect color perception approving the shade of her flame-colored gown with its jet sequins.

"I feel more like the tiger; my ride made me ravenous," she answered with a smile, conscious, but not realizing that her nervousness had fled at the first inflection of the steady voice, and at that instant the sad notes of the clock sounded the hour and before the deep vibrations had drifted from the ear, Virginia heard the resonant tones for which she had been so nervously waiting; at the same moment her eyes met Leyden's. It seemed to the girl that she leaned upon that steady gaze; her nervousness fled away.

"Count Dessalines," announced the footman.

Virginia was conscious of a swift sense of disappointment; more than that—almost of vexation. Struggling with the swollen river, carrying Giles in his great arms—upon the cricket field, potent and replete with action—astride his man-killing stallion, Dessalines had been magnificent. In the drawing-room, in evening dress, he became at first sight, bizarre; when the primary sense of

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buffoonery had passed, uncouth. Immaculate, unctuous, smiling, suave, with a luster of black satiny skin, the yellow lamplight aglisten in his kinky hair, the snowy shirt bosom beneath the face of jet, the impression was grotesque; as one gradually appreciated the massive structures—the gross anatomy beneath the fine and faultless fabrics, noted the great deltoids bulging under the broadcloth, the huge thighs, bowed legs, the vast extent of *homo*—what had at first sight been burlesque became shocking! Evening dress upon such a monster offended all sense of the congruous; it stripped him of his dignity.

“*Ach!*” muttered Leyden in Virginia’s ear. “If he could but wear a burnoose or a scarlet turban or a leopard skin and a necklace of teeth! And now listen when he talks; architects do not design drawing-rooms for such a voice. He should be banging a drum with his fist, and howling!”

Virginia laughed; Leyden meant that she should; he realized that Virginia was affected by the great black presence and knew that there is nothing to slacken tension like laughter.

Dessalines’ amporous voice was filling the room as the hostess led him to those of the guests whom he had not met. Virginia, watching him closely, saw that as the women fluttered, so Dessalines would expand; his manners were perfect, his face gracious and suave, his bearing self-conscious and self-confident. With Sir Henry he said a jesting word, with Giles his manner approached the patronizing. From Giles he passed to Dr. Leyden and then as he paused, Virginia’s great eyes opened wide in the fullness of perception.

The cool, steady eyes of the naturalist met those of

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the Haytian and one watching closely could have seen the flat nostrils slightly dilate; the voice of the Haytian seemed to falter; he mumbled a trifle, seemed ill at ease, hesitated awkwardly. Dr. Leyden's cool, even voice cut through his as the hum of a bullet cleaves the rumble of a drum; Dessalines, bewildered, found himself listening submissively to the words of a master.

"Ah, yes, Comte Dessalines," Leyden was saying, "I know your country well; a beautiful country, but if you will permit me to say so, open to improvement in many ways. With your advantages there is much that you may do."

"That is to be my work," said Dessalines. "The uplifting of Hayti—not the uplifting of myself at the expense of Hayti; the stamping out of ancient savagery, the promulgation of our ethics, political and social, of the economics and religion of advanced civilizations." The great voice began to swell; the rhythmic roll of euphonic words restored the African's self-confidence. "My people, . . ." he began majestically.

"Are for the most part kind and harmless negroes, hag-ridden by unscrupulous leaders," interrupted Leyden in a dry, practical voice; "just so. All that your people need is decent treatment; to be encouraged to diligence and thrift—what any peasant class needs. Exactly, I am very glad to find that you take such a sensible view of the case."

Dessalines, his oratorical bubble pricked, subsided helplessly, smiled, shuffled a trifle, and seemed for the moment at a loss. At this moment dinner was announced and Dessalines, as guest of honor, took out his hostess.

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“If I had let the fellow run on,” muttered Leyden to Virginia, as she laid her hand upon his arm, “we would all have been carried away by his eloquence; he would have wrung our hearts with sympathy for his magnificent cause . . . and a good dinner would have got cold!”

CHAPTER VII

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ACH! The inane popular delusion!" exclaimed Leyden as he slapped his riding boot with his crop. While waiting for Virginia, with whom he was to ride, he was talking with Giles, who was that morning to inspect some horses which Manning planned to send to Carolina. "Take a savage," continued Leyden, "of the imperfect civilization of a century, cover the nakedness of his body with a pair of well-cut breeches and the nakedness of his brain with a vocabulary and behold . . . a brother! Observe this negro, Dessalines, as he rode in here yesterday upon his man-eating stallion; such a spectacle! One does not need to look deep there to find the pagan . . . and speaking of the stallion, I understand that the brute nearly killed a groom the first time he was brought here. It is like a black to endanger the lives of his friends for the sake of indulging his vanity."

Giles looked troubled. "It seems to me that you are unfair to Dessalines, Dr. Leyden," he said, flushing like a schoolboy. "Dessalines has shown that he possesses a good mind."

"In what way?" asked Leyden quietly. "I think that I can predicate. In classics, in languages, in rhetoric, in debate—never by any chance in mathematics or anything requiring a complex cerebration. Am I not right? Yes?"

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"But he is a magnificent speaker," protested Giles.

"I do not doubt it. But did you ever pause to analyze *what* he said and see how much of the effect lay simply in his choice and delivery of well-sounding words? How much in the thought underlying? With his presence, striking personality, deep fund of sheer animal magnetism he could not fail to be impressive."

"But surely you admit that the negro is capable of high mental attainments if properly instructed? They have shown this in Liberia, in our West Indian colonies, in the States. Has it not been demonstrated beyond doubt that under the proper course of mental culture the African is capable of a high grade of mental attainment?"

"I do not think it has, Giles; personally, I do not believe that the negro possesses much mentality; the mulatto, ah, yes! One cannot fix a limit to his. But how many individuals of the negro race who have no white blood have achieved things? And as for the mulatto, *he* is a mongrel, and a mongrel will sometimes inherit from either side of the house alone. He might be physically negro and mentally white. One can predict nothing from the half-caste. But as far as the pure negro is concerned there is no race in the world who, considering their advantages and numbers, have achieved as little as he . . . ah, here is Mr. Moultrie; no doubt he will give us his views."

Manning had come out of the house as Leyden concluded; at the last words of the naturalist his face clouded.

"Negro question again?" he asked coldly. "Don't let me interrupt. I am biased; besides, I hate the topic,

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which is discussed a lot more than it is entitled to be. We have the worst of it in the States, and while everybody is ranting and gnashing his teeth the thing is quietly working out its own salvation."

Leyden nodded.

"I say," said Giles, "do you mind telling us how it is working out its salvation, Manning, or, if the subject is too distasteful——"

"By immorality, chiefly," answered Manning in a hard voice. "Take the State of Virginia, for example; once it was full of negroes; to-day a full-blooded negro is scarce, but there is no end of mixed breeds of every shade. The mulattoes are not a strong people; their inclination is to breed with whites, and so the race gets lighter and weaker and tends to run out."

"But I thought that it was just the other way," interrupted Giles, "that they were more apt to 'throw back' and breed blacks."

"That is the popular belief, but it is not justified by the result. One has only to go there to see how the full-blooded negro has faded out; and this is true, to a less extent, of others of the Southern States. To begin with the negroes were all full-blooded; to-day, whether through intermingling with whites or from changed geographical and climatic conditions I will not say, but every decade the type of full-blooded negro appears to be growing more rare."

"You are modifying your statement regarding immorality," said Giles.

"Possibly, but that factor undoubtedly enters into the case. To begin with, the laws of the Southern States forbid intermarriage; mulattresses, quadroons, and octo-

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rooms are often very pretty and look down upon the blacker types, preferring a white lover to a black husband."

"In that case," said Giles slowly, "it seems to me that the laws of the State in this regard tend toward moral degradation. Why not legitimize the intermarriage of whites and half-castes?"

"And get a yellow nation?" demanded Manning fiercely.

"But you just said that mulattoes preferred to mix with whites and in this way tended gradually to eliminate the negroid characteristics; it seems to me a lot better to have a community of legitimate and respectable mixed breeds than a race of bastards who are brought into the world morally, and, therefore, often physically handicapped from the very start. Don't you think so, Leyden?"

"Yes, I think the point is well taken. Morality should always prevail; nor do I think that sanctioning intermarriage between whites and those of mixed breed would in any wise threaten the color of your nation, Mr. Moultrie. Even in States where the intermarriage of blacks and whites is legalized, the commonwealth does not appear to be affected; there is no law *compelling* a white person to marry a black, and to my mind the person who wishes to do so isn't such a great distance removed from the black anyway. As far as the mixed-breed is concerned, did you ever realize, Mr. Moultrie, what a gratuitous insult you people of the South have paid your race by decreeing that an individual possessing a half or any fraction less of negro blood should be classed as a negro?"

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"Insult," cried Manning flushing angrily. "I see it just the other way."

"But does it not occur to you that such a decree is as good as admitting that a quarter of African blood is a stronger and more potent factor of the individual than three quarters of white? Don't you consider a white man a much more virile creature than a black? Upon my soul, the injustice dealt out for years upon years to the half- or three-quarter-caste is simply appalling. My remedy for an ink spot upon a light coat would be to wash it out as much as possible; not to pour ink over the whole garment. Why don't you wash out your mulatto race? Get it as white as you can by dilutions of white blood. Go ahead and legislate against blacks marrying whites if you like, but include with the whites all individuals having any white blood."

Leyden stopped speaking and there was a silence which lasted for several moments. Manning was shocked and angry and a trifle puzzled; Giles was calmly thoughtful. He turned to Leyden.

"Then how about the pure negro, Dr. Leyden?" he asked. "Suppose that he is kept black; in what does his salvation lie?"

"I believe," said Leyden slowly, "that the salvation of the pure negro is to be found in the two great civilizers of the world: religion and education."

Manning slightly raised his eyebrows; the expression did not escape the keen eyes of the naturalist.

"Do you disagree with me, Mr. Moultrie?" he asked, turning to Manning.

"I am afraid that I do. My own observations tend to make me doubt the existence of true religion among

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negroes. It seems to me that where it apparently exists it is in reality only a mixture of fantasy and superstition, and indulged in because it gratifies the negro craving for the emotional."

"I am sorry to hear you say that," said Leyden. "My own experience inclines me to a more optimistic view; I think that if you had ever had the opportunity of contrasting the results of the negro worship of a malign deity like Vaudoux with that of God, and His Son, Jesus Christ, you would appreciate what the latter worship does for the negro. Yet the former fills what you claim appeals to the negro in the latter, the indulgence of superstition, fantasy, and the emotions."

"Then you believe that the Christian religion has a practical uplifting influence upon the race?"

"Mr. Moultrie," said Leyden earnestly, "I have lived for the most of my active life among savage and primitive people and I can honestly say that I have never known the Christian religion to fail to uplift and enlighten any human being who wished to accept it. Enforced Christianity has, of course, like all compulsory religions, been followed by some terrible results. In the negro we find a ready acceptance of the doctrines of Christianity, and it is my belief that this, combined with the education which he is now offered in many parts of the world, will in time result in his salvation . . . but it will take many years."

"And in the meantime?" asked Manning.

"In the meantime he must be held as well as led by a strong and steady hand. My word." Leyden wheeled suddenly to Manning and there was a note of fierce impatience in his voice. "I hope you will pardon me for

saying so, Mr. Moultrie, but for a country which has had as much experience of the negro as yours has, it seems to me that about as much intelligence has been shown in handling the problem as . . . as . . . I will spare you the metaphor. First you whack him through slavery; then you liberate him, and encourage him to ride his old master; then you give him a vote in one part of the country and take it away from him in another; though why Uncle Sam should give a vote to an ignorant, low-grade, semicivilized son of a black slave and deny it to his own highly educated and responsible white daughters is more than I can see; then you want to hug him, to elect him to office, to deport him, to burn him at the stake, all in one breath. Why don't you draw up an armistice with our black brother, find out what the nation really does want to do with him, and then go ahead and do it. Civilize your backwoods and half-savage white districts first, and then go to work and civilize your negro."

Leyden's even voice stopped abruptly, when he listened.

"I hear Miss Moultrie coming; she dislikes the topic. I hope that you will be successful in your search for thoroughbreds; your Carolina horses, as I remember them, are already very good, however."

Virginia joined them at this moment and Giles rang for the horses.

"Which way?" asked Leyden, as he fell in at the right of Virginia.

"River road." She slacked her snaffle and they cantered down the broad, straight avenue, swung sharply around the north end of the water garden, through the oak grove next, and so into the highway.

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"*Ach!* The glorious English June," cried Leyden, filling his deep lungs with the fragrant air, ". . . when it *is* glorious. Did you ever observe, Miss Moultrie, how very much drizzle is required to make us properly appreciate the sunshine?"

"I should think that *you* would rather appreciate the drizzle, Dr. Leyden. You must have rather too much sun in your profession."

"Better too much of anything than not enough. But then I like it all; that is the beauty of being a student of natural sciences. One can put one's discomforts on a glass slide and tease them to pieces with a needle. Once when I had a sharp attack of fever I derived the greatest diversion from studying the plasmodia in my blood under the microscope."

"I fancy that you are very seldom ill," replied Virginia. She glanced critically at the well-knit figure and cleanly chiseled features, tanned with the chromic yellow which comes of the reeking blaze of the equator. "I do not think that I ever saw a man who had lived so much in the tropics who appeared in such perfect health; yet Sir Henry tells me that you are usually treating a fever."

Leyden laughed. "It is true that I had a chill last night," he said. "I am but just back from the Orinoco, which is more than most men could say had they been where I have. The man best fitted for my work is not he who appears to be immune, but the one who is subject to light attacks. The other man is apt to die quickly and without warning. I receive my caution with a word of thanks and profit by it; also, being a botanist and having a knowledge of therapeutics, there are few places where

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disease exists in which I cannot find my antidote. I wander among my enemies, recognizing my friends; where we find the one there is usually the other."

"Poison and antidote?"

"Yes, friend and enemy."

"One is fortunate to know them apart," said Virginia.

"You would never be puzzled in that way," answered Leyden. "I have an idea that you would be more susceptible to a rough impulse than to a rough speech." Virginia felt as if his eyes were upon her, but as she glanced at him quickly she was surprised to find that he was buttoning a glove.

"You flatter my astuteness," she answered, nettled.

"You say that because you thought that I was looking at you when my eyes were elsewhere? No, my mind was watching you, not my eyes; it was that which you felt."

"You are uncanny!" exclaimed Virginia. Leyden smiled. "Or else," she continued, "you are only unconventional; intelligently unconventional, unlike most *eccentriques* who are stupidly so. I fancy that your mind wears its hair long and drinks warm, fresh, cowy milk for breakfast!"

Leyden laughed outright. "No, I am nothing as interesting as that; I am natural; from having lived much with Nature I employ certain useful simplicities of expression and impression first scorned and then forgotten by an advanced civilization. I know that you are suffering from a rough impression at the present moment; you are only semiconscious of it; possibly you ascribe it to me, whereas, it is in reality because Count Dessalines is not

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far ahead of us and is riding slowly. I will not tell you how I know this; you shall determine it for yourself."

Virginia lifted her head suddenly; Leyden, watching her, saw her quick intake of breath. She began to put her separate keen senses to work. "A puma," thought Leyden, "... uneasy . . . disturbed . . . disquieted." Virginia had been so unawares. Her long hazel eyes narrowed, the delicate nostrils dilated, lips parted, head slightly bent as her sensitive ears quickened. "*Ach!* what a woman! . . . what a woman!" thought Leyden, watching her, for at this moment Virginia was beautiful with a tense, lithe, glowing beauty, sensuous in its strong, virile, keen-sensed aliveness, and Leyden was too completely masculine not to feel its influence. The girl's figure, full, strong, supple, matchless in curving outline reminded him of the lithe body of a puma.

Suddenly she laughed. "I have it . . . I know!" And as she turned to him her manner became suddenly diffident; a school child before its master; prepared, but shy because of this preparation; aquiver through fear lest it fail to justify its knowledge.

"How many senses?" demanded Leyden, in the curt tone of a pedagogue.

"Two."

"Not enough. Which two?"

"Sight and smell."

"The two most infallible," admitted Leyden. "One could hardly have expected that you would catch the sound which I did. What did you get?"

"Count Dessalines uses that French scent, *Fleur Tropicale*."

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"So! this is not difficult."

"And here are the tracks of a horse without a carriage, for part of the time he is walking on the firm sod where he would put a carriage wheel in the ditch." She looked at the naturalist expectantly.

"And is that all?" asked Leyden.

"Yes . . . that is . . ."

"It is not enough. You have seen the horse twice and have not noticed the peculiar manner in which he is shod." Leyden's note was reproving. "This might be any equestrian; myself, I told by a musical note."

Again Virginia laughed, in the eager excited way habitual to her when intensely interested.

"I know! I know! The ring of that heavy silver Spanish bit! I noticed it yesterday; it is like a bell. It must have been that which I heard some time ago when we were passing through the oak grove."

"It was there that I heard it for the first time," said Leyden. "I have a rather unusually accurate musical ear; when Dessalines rode in yesterday to leave you his monograph 'On the Regeneration of a Race,' he had a little difficulty with his horse . . . By the way, does it not strike you as a trifle odd that the ringing note of that bit should have carried so far to-day; farther even than the sound of the horse's tread, which I much doubt that you heard?"

Virginia frowned and her piquant face became stern. "I know," she answered. "He must have struck the horse across the nose with his crop."

Again Leyden threw her a swift admiring glance. "You are unusual, Miss Moultrie; if you will permit me to say so. I see these things and understand them as

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the result of years of practice; with me, keen observation is a craft developed through necessity and one upon which my livelihood and my life itself have been dependent. Your faculties are most perceptive and receptive."

"Little things impress me," said Virginia, "only if characteristic. Consequently I save only what I need, and let the rest go. The first time that Count Dessalines called he struck his horse in that way, across the muzzle, and made the bit ring, and the sound dinned in my ears long after he had gone; that and the expression of his face. One could not blame him for striking the horse," she pursued defensively; "it had just tried to kill the groom . . . and yet his action shocked me; I think because one felt that he rather relished the chastisement; there was that look in his face . . . and yet—" the words came faster and Leyden's wide vision perceived the heaving of her bosom, "such strength!— Ah, *such strength!* Such magnificent brute force . . . one felt that it was less the discipline of master to brute than the mastery of *the stronger* brute. Do you understand?" Words and breath were both coming faster. "It was not as if Dessalines controlled the animal by virtue of superior intelligence and higher mentality, but simply that he was the stronger animal."

"Which is about the proper proportion," assented Leyden.

"Yes, and as a result his action while shocking and merciless did not impress one as cruel."

"Because it was so close to the ground."

"Yes, a tiger leaping upon a buck; one fierce animal, with claws, rending another which has only hoofs.

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If a white man had done that thing one would have arrested him, no matter how dangerous the horse; with Dessalines . . . please tell me, Dr. Leyden, why this race has not achieved great things? The force, the power of brain and body, and the compelling weight of such a personality! I do not see how other men can resist—can refuse to obey the will projection of such a being; he is terrifying to me—yet, I will admit, fascinating—and—and do you know I think that if he were to say to me, suddenly, ‘bring me that footstool’ . . . ”

“You think nothing of the sort!” interrupted Leyden sternly. Virginia’s eyes had assumed a peculiar rapt expression, pupils dilated and focused beyond the point upon which the vision rested, voice of a peculiar flat tone; semi-autohypnosis. At the naturalist’s brusque note she started, looked puzzled, vexed, then laughed nervously.

“What was I saying? You are an odd man, Dr. Leyden; one unclothes one’s mind in your presence with a shocking lack of modesty. Speaking of Dessalines, there he is ahead of us.”

“Yes, that is Dessalines; your genius! And now, for your soul’s good, watch and I will show you something. You speak of his dominant force; it is inversely proportional to what he feels to be the subjugation of another mind to his; it is this which makes people of his race so imposing to those whom they feel to be ignorant of their limitations. I will demonstrate this for you now; perhaps he may have read me too deeply, but I think not. You will observe, Miss Moultrie . . .” the curt voice of the pedagogue had returned; the tone of the naturalist was that of a clinical chief exhibiting an illus-

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trative case before a class of students, "this man's manner after I have spoken will be assertive; it may even be arrogant when he feels me submissive, but as he feels a gathering weight opposed to this will projection of his which you pretend to think so irresistible, you will see a change . . . *ach!* he sees us."

Dessalines had drawn to the side of the road and was awaiting their approach. The great black stallion, neck arched, tail streaming, stood like a statue, a statue of heroic proportions. Virginia's nervousness was in some subtle way communicated to her mount, which began to caracole restlessly.

Dessalines removed his hat with a flourish; Virginia could feel the atmosphere charged with the counter-currents of the adverse influences about to engage. The personality of Dessalines, ultraphysical, material, loomed sinister. The huge stature, shocking strength, compelling voice, hypnotizing eyes which were clear and lustrous and not of the chocolate shade usual in his race, but of an odd tone of color, a gun metal in tint and sheen; all gathered ominous as a cyclone cloud, appalling as it hovered above an entity as little flamboyant as the clear, concise, concentrated, and thoroughly contained personality of Leyden.

Dessalines was upon the left; the road being narrow at this point brought Virginia close to him. He had ridden his great stallion twice daily since coming to the locality, and the animal was by this time thoroughly cowed. Virginia noticed that bits and reins were flecked with bloody foam; the stallion stood still as a listening deer, but the wildness of the dark eye and the quiver of the fine nostrils told of the pressure within.

"Good morning, Miss Moultrie," rumbled the deep voice. "Good morning, Dr. Leyden."

"Good morning, Count Dessalines," replied Virginia, and drew rein, for it seemed to her scarcely fitting to pass without a few words of greeting a man who had saved her life and that of her *fiancé*.

Leyden had replied to Dessalines' greeting, and now, seeing Virginia about to halt, remarked in an oddly timid voice:

"Is that brute of yours quite safe, Comte Dessalines? Of course we appreciate your mastery of him, but is it not dangerous for us to come near?" The inflection, manner, voice was that of one physically afraid; Virginia glanced at the Hollander in quick surprise. Leyden's expression was such as one would expect to accompany the words; it showed doubt, uncertainty, fear. Virginia felt the blood in her cheeks; she could not understand it; all was at variance with the character with which she had endowed him.

Dessalines' great voice rolled out in striking contrast; it carried an accent a trifle blatant.

"You need have no fear; the animal knows his master." He struck the great neck a resounding slap and Virginia saw a fine quiver ripple the silken surface of the animal from ears to tail. "For a week the little rascal and I have been fighting it out, and once or twice I will confess that my life has been in danger, but now . . . ah, now he is conquered, and he knows it, the naughty fellow!" Again the massive hand smote the thick neck and again the fine shudder rippled the whole tense fabric of the animal. Then Leyden spoke.

"There is probably not another man in England who

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could have conquered him, Comte Dessalines. He appears thoroughly subdued, but—eh—eh—eh,” the voice grew thin, “I confess to a nervousness. I am afraid to have Miss Moultrie venture so close to him. . . .” He laid his hand upon Virginia’s bridle-rein and drew her horse’s head to one side.

“Please do not do that!” said Virginia a trifle sharply. She was vexed, disappointed, chagrined. “Count Dessalines can control his horse, I am quite sure.”

“Your fears are quite without foundation, Dr. Leyden,” said Dessalines. His voice was louder—contained a peremptory note. “You will permit me to observe that if there was the slightest danger to Miss Moultrie or *yourself* I would hardly remain here to discuss it. In fact, Miss Moultrie,” he continued, and the rough note in his voice smoothed with the soft undulation of a wave motion as it attains deep water, “I am so confident of my control of this brute that I shall even venture to ask your permission to join you. If Dr. Leyden is nervous perhaps he would be more comfortable to ride a trifle in advance.” He turned to Leyden with a bland, assured smile.

And then there came a surprise. Virginia’s horse, restive, nervous, perhaps, at the presence of its forbidding neighbors, had been tossing and backing and side-stepping eager to be away; Virginia, without being aware of it, had gradually edged close to Dessalines. It was at this point that Leyden laid aside his mask. Reining back sharply he passed behind Virginia and thrust his horse directly between her and Dessalines, slightly crowding the Haytian into the ditch.

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"You amaze me, Comte Dessalines," said Leyden sternly. "In the first place permit me to remind you that *I* am at present acting as Miss Moultrie's escort and that I am responsible for her safety; in the second place I beg to inform you that whatever the custom may be in Hayti, in England it is not good form to interrupt the previously arranged engagement of a lady and gentleman. This has nothing to do with it however; I consider your presence upon that animal a menace to the safety of Miss Moultrie and have therefore the honor to wish you good day."

Dessalines, through the bland and unctuous assurance of whose voice the keen-edged words of Leyden had cut like a knife through tallow, stared in bewilderment; perhaps generations of heredity were against him; perhaps his subjective centers mirrored ancient impulses where such words were followed by the bite of a lead-tipped lash; perhaps the shallower intellect was groping for a missile in the mud beneath; at all events he was first at a loss, and then, before he could recover or rally his dignity in its rout, the two-edged voice was at him again and he drew back blinking, almost with the turn of the head which one sees in an ox lashed across the face by a switch in the hand of the farmer boy . . . and all the while Leyden was thrusting forward, a rampart between the African and the white maiden with the shocked hazel eyes, the pale face, and the grand scale of impulses which began below those of Dessalines and terminated in high overtones of these same far above the reach even of the naturalist.

At the first note of the cold, authoritative voice the girl's heart had seemed to pause, to flutter, and then to

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beat with a wild excitement. She realized with a throb of awe that Leyden had been quietly demonstrating his theory in the illustration of which he was making use of this appalling individual, as a painting master might twist the limbs of a lay figure.

"I do not wish to hurt your feelings, Comte Dessalines," said Leyden, more kindly, and this very kindness was the effervescence of his first *brusquerie*, "but I will take no chances. Now wheel that brute to one side, if you please. There, do you see, he is going bad already." For the plummy tail had begun to switch, the nostrils to evert, and the little ears were laid flat to the high crest. One saw that the beast was about to strike, in fact *would* have struck, but at that instant Leyden emitted a peculiar growling sound at which the horse sprang back and stood quivering.

Dessalines began to stammer, to apologize, to half heartedly attempt to assert himself, saying nothing which was consistent; the man was a medley of disjointed phrases. Suddenly Leyden threw back his head.

"*Holà! mon chère Comte*," he cried gaily, and burst into a torrent of odd-sounding *patois*, so swift and voluble and dialectic that Virginia, to whom the French was like a mother tongue, was unable to follow it.

Dessalines stared. Dessalines began to grin. Leyden threw out both hands, shrugged, pattered, jabbered. Dessalines began to laugh with a great expanse of white teeth. Leyden laughed, Leyden mimicked, Leyden made a grimace. Dessalines laughed heartily, roared, became convulsed, rocked back and forth in the saddle, almost fell, in fact one could see that he longed to jump down and roll upon the ground, and at this perihelion of his

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mirth Leyden nodded to Virginia and clicked to the horses.

"*Eh bien, chère Comte!*" he called over his shoulder, ". . . *au revoir!*"

"*Au revoir, mon chère docteur . . . au revoir, camarade!* Oh . . . oh . . . ha-ha-ha- . . ." and then as an afterthought, "*Au revoir, mademoiselle!*" and so they parted.

For a furlong they rode in silence; Virginia pale, mute, Leyden smiling to himself.

"If I did not like you," said Virginia, at length, "and if I did not think that you liked me, I should be very much afraid of you. There was something positively uncanny in the manner in which you put that great primitive intellect through its tricks."

"*Ach!* It was as I told you; first I encouraged him and he rode across me rough shod; then I snubbed him and he cowed; the tactics are the same which one employs with a wet Newfoundland; next I am kind, and he licks my hand; then I play with him, and he romps and rolls and runs after the stick and forgets that he was cuffed. Do you not find, . . ." he glanced at her narrowly, "that the spectacle lessens your awe of the wild animal?"

"But he is just as strong as ever," replied Virginia. "He did strongly what you made him want to do. He is just as imposing as ever—like his horse, if he is subdued. It is his great, blind, primitive strength which is impressive. I doubt if he has any soul."

Leyden nodded, looked thoughtful, disappointed. For perhaps a mile they rode in silence, each absorbed—Virginia in herself, Leyden in Virginia.

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"But the horse?" asked Virginia abruptly. "What was that noise? The noise which frightened the horse?"

"*Ach!*" said Leyden; "that was only the growl of a timber wolf. You see the horse has its hereditary instincts as well as the rider."

CHAPTER VIII

DESSALINES' GARDEN PARTY

MANNING had gone up to London in response to an invitation. It had been the habit of the Maltbys to remain in the country every other year, for Sir Henry was devoted to his horticulture, Giles to the open air, and Lady Maltby herself cared but little for the life in town; consequently the London house was closed for the greater part of the time.

Manning had asked Virginia to go up with him until his sailing date, but seeing that she preferred to remain at Fenwick Towers he had not pressed the matter. Virginia herself loved the country; also she loved Giles, Sir Henry, Lady Maltby, the place, a few animals; on the whole there was no particular reason why she should not remain. Besides this she was deeply interested in Dr. Leyden, from whom, it seemed to her, she obtained much at every conversation, and she did not wish to miss his visit.

Then there was Dessalines, whose calls had become almost daily, and whose unique personality was a never-failing source of curiosity. Since Dr. Leyden's extraordinary exposé of his racial psychology, Dessalines had lost for Virginia much of his vague uncomfortable fascination; in its place there had been developed the sort of sympathetic interest one might feel for a savage of almost civilized talents and disposition.

After Leyden's reproof, Virginia did not see him

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again upon his stallion; instead, he rode a large, docile animal. To her surprise and a trifle to her amusement he had, upon next meeting Leyden, burst immediately into a roar of typical negro laughter, accompanied by thigh slappings, wags of the head, utterly forgetful, as far as Virginia could see, of the naturalist's curt reprimands, and remembering only his jokes; yet it was most evident that he was afraid of Leyden; not coweringly, but respectfully; also, that he liked him, was rather devoted to him, and pleased beyond expression at any mark of approval from the Hollander.

The quality in Dessalines which had first appealed to Virginia, his uncouth superhuman strength, had lately been dormant of demonstration. His calls had been conventional; the weather had been too bad for out of door athletics—riding, boating, tennis; Dessalines told them that he had been working hard reading international law and political economy. Giles was evidently very fond of the Haytian, as what right-minded Englishman would not be after the heroic manner in which he had saved Virginia's life and his own, to say nothing of the wonderful way in which he had maintained the honor of the county on the cricket field.

Sir Henry approved of Dessalines and was interested in him and his work. Lady Maltby was mildly fascinated; there never arose a question regarding his caste; he was a gentleman, a nobleman for that matter, although of a patent at which one might smile indulgently; but he was clean and well conducted, well educated, and possessed of a style and presence which carried with it no admission that he was not the equal of any.

Leyden looked on with no comment; talked with Vir-

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ginia, joked with Sir Henry, chatted with Guijon, who worshiped him, took daily diminishing doses of a fever decoction in a green bottle, and missed not one detail or vibration of the conditions about him.

"Dessalines wants us for Saturday afternoon," Giles announced at luncheon. "Due notice will arrive later, so nobody must make other plans. He is going to give us what he calls a *fête aquatique* on the river."

"He has the Haddington cottage, Maurits," said Sir Henry. "Directly on the river. He told me that he had taken it for the summer, as he wanted a quiet place in which to read. It is rather odd that he should have chosen England as his educational field; most Haytians go to France, do they not?"

"Ten out of ten go to Paris," replied Leyden. "I have heard of their going to Germany, to England, but it is rare. None by any chance ever goes to the United States."

"Dessalines once spoke of that," said Giles. "He told me that Haytians went to Paris, studied a little, were petted and made a good deal of, and usually ended by getting in debt and going home to take it out of the country. He said that he came to England because the life was cleaner and more wholesome, and he was over here to go ahead and not backward. He said that it was easy enough to go backward in Hayti, . . . what?"

"I think that it does him great credit," said Lady Maltby. "I have never known a negro before, socially, and Count Dessalines had quite altered my ideas in regard to the possibilities of his race." She turned to Virginia with a smile. "I suppose that Manning would be quite furious to hear me say that, my dear."

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"I do not think that Manning is a fair judge," replied Virginia.

"From what I have read," observed Sir Henry, in his somewhat pedantic manner, "I should say that it was very difficult to get a fair judgment on the negro question; there is the opinion of the man who has known him on the West Coast where he is pure savage, the opinion of the man who knows him as a recently liberated slave—Manning's opinion—the opinion of the man who knows him in the northern United States as a political if scarcely social equal, and then the opinions of people like ourselves who know him at his best, a finished product like Count Dessalines." Each of his points Sir Henry had carefully tallied upon his slender, white fingers: his thin, ascetic face, intellectual, broad browed, narrow of chin which was fringed with a square-cut beard of an open, separate-haired consistency and seemed less masculine than none; the whole face was flushed with the nervous shyness characteristic of him.

"It seems to me," he pursued, "that to talk at all intelligently upon the negro question a man must know the negro in all of his phases; to know him too well in any one alone, would be less advantageous than to have merely observed him casually in all; it is simply the case of the 'Ten Blind Men of Hindoostan' who went to see an elephant and decided that he resembled a rope, a tree, a fan, a spear, a wall, as different ones felt his tail, leg, ear, tusk, and I do not know what besides; you know the rhyme."

"Right," exclaimed Giles. "I have heard Manning say more than once that there is nobody who knows more of the African than he . . . yet he has never even seen

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Africa. According to that, some negro in the States who has only seen Americans might set up to be an authority upon all of the English because they are Anglo-Saxons."

"I think," said Leyden, "that there is really very little difference between an African negro and one from Carolina; the chief cause of their perplexity in the United States seems to me to be because they attempt to class the yellow with the black; a mulatto to my mind is less a negro than a white. There are really not enough pure negroes left in the United States to construct a racial problem on. I think that in time the mulatto will prove the antitoxin of the black." He glanced at Virginia and abruptly changed the topic.

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It was the day of the *fête* to which they had been asked by Dessalines. A bright sun temporarily obscured by huge cumulus clouds, alternated areas of high light and shadow, the *chiaroscuro* of the Italians. The temperature was high, a trifle too high for the comfort of all but Leyden.

Dessalines' cottage was on the bank of the river, the stream at this point expanding into a diminutive lake. Just below, it was crossed by the bridge of the private road leading to Chelton House, then unoccupied. The cottage was a part of the large estate; it had been built, by the last proprietor, as a summer studio for his brother-in-law, a landscape painter. As it was intended only for summer residence it had been patterned after a Japanese villa, and oddly enough the peculiar formation of the site had been found to permit of certain semitropical trees and shrubs which would grow nowhere else in the locality, if, indeed, anywhere in England. It is a curious

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thing, known to those thoroughly familiar with a vicinity, that there are certain spots of this character which will carry straight through the year a small local climate quite distinct from the surrounding country.

"Irasshai," for the place was named after the Japanese "come in," was one of these spots; whether it was the sheltered river bottom or, as Guijon claimed, something in the soil, it was the earliest and latest place to find wild flowers, and the former tenant had succeeded in growing there, live oaks, mimosa, crape myrtle, and others which it was necessary to protect in winter.

The site of the cottage was several feet above the water; a broad veranda, inclosed by jalousies, swept the southeast corner; Japanese ivy overgrew the greater part of the cottage; a fence of woven bamboo formed a miniature compound. On the edge of the stream a pavilion built on spiles sheltered the boats, while the upper story furnished a little pagoda where it was the custom to have tea served. Beds of purple iris were planted along the banks; masses of hydrangeas, blue and white, seemed to grow in wild profusion about the pagoda; everywhere were flowers.

One entered this oriental fairyland beneath a huge red-lacquered torii; stone lanterns stood on either side, and in one corner of the garden there was a tiny shrine, the sand upon the altar bristling with joss sticks.

Virginia had visited the cottage before, but never at this season of the year. The party from Fenwick Towers included the Misses O'Connor, Irish girls, schoolmates of Virginia. They had come in the drag, but were obliged, owing to the low-growing boughs, to leave it at the beginning of the turf road, a distance of five hundred

yards from the house. This had previously been arranged by Giles, at the request of Dessalines. They were expecting some surprise, something unique, but were scarcely prepared for the charming innovation devised for their reception.

As they descended from the drag four Japanese, each with a jinrikisha, stepped from a leafy thicket and kotoed before the ladies. Lady Maltby uttered a little scream of delight.

"How awfully jolly! It has been the dream of my life to ride in a 'rikisha."

"What a lark!" cried Virginia. She eyed the smiling little jins doubtfully. "But surely we are too heavy on this turf road; it is quite soft in spots."

"What a duck of a perambulator!" cried Miss O'Connor. "But what if the horse should take fright and run away! How ever could you stop him? You remember, Kathleen, how Cousin Ned was forever talking about the 'rikishas when first he came back from India?"

"And is this a 'rikisha?" asked Miss Kathleen, who had always possessed a vague idea that the word signified some oriental dish.

The little Japanese, who, after their first objections to performing the menial duty had been overcome by the persuasive tongue of the valet, Jules, had quite entered into the spirit of the thing, continued to bow and smile and motion toward the vehicles. Leyden stepped to Lady Maltby's side. "Permit me," he said, and assisted her into the 'rikisha, then turned and said a few rapid words to the jin. The four men started, stared, looked incredulous, then glancing at one another, broke into an excited rattle of short, monosyllabic words; Leyden chattered

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also, smiled, ducked, laughed in the childlike way peculiar to the Japanese.

"You amazing person!" cried Virginia, "is there any tongue which you do not speak?"

"There are few in which I cannot make myself understood," answered Leyden, with a smile. "There is none which I speak well, but for my purpose vocabulary is of more value than rhetoric."

He placed Miss Kathleen in her 'rikisha and they started, the men walking rapidly to keep pace with the short trot of the Japanese. They plunged into the miniature forest, wound between bushes of holly, across a toy Japanese bridge which spanned a singsong little rivulet; on its bank a tiny temple was half hid in a clump of hazels; dainty stone steps led to the door. They entered a fen where the same little rill wound about to form a tiny paddy, diked, flooded, green with sprouting rice.

"If Manning saw that," said Giles, "he would give tongue . . . what?"

"He would probably drive Dessalines out to irrigate," said Leyden, flippantly. They turned a corner and came suddenly upon the most striking spectacle. Just ahead the torii marked the entrance of the inclosure, forming the frame, as it were, for the lustrous green of the ivy-grown cottage and the banks of purple iris. Directly in the center of this frame stood Dessalines, clad in spotless white, bareheaded, smiling, towering, a majestic figure in the midst of those Lilliputian surroundings. The sable face smiling a welcome, the flashing teeth white as the immaculate white serge, the gigantic figure; all was less grotesque than impressive; there was an imperial quality in the man's calm unconsciousness of his amazing in-

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appropriateness. Giles, receiving guests, intimate friends, conventional folk, at his father's door would have been less at his ease.

The tableau was greeted by an instant of involuntary silence. "*Ach!*" muttered Leyden, beneath his breath. "That is fine . . . that spectacle. I did not think that he had it in him, this negro." Like many men who spend much of their lives in solitude of thought, Leyden had the habit of audible self-communing when suddenly impressed. Virginia overheard him.

Then Dessalines did a graceful thing; a Gallic action. He threw out both great arms, the massive head went back.

"Welcome, *mes amis*," he called, in his deep voice. "Welcome to Japan!" He stepped quickly to the side of Lady Maltby. "My poor house is honored, *chère madame*."

"And your guests are delighted, Count Dessalines." She gave him her hand; he took it in his, bent over it, the thick lips brushed her fingers. Virginia, glancing with a gasp toward Lady Maltby, saw the faint quiver which passed over her face. The other women Dessalines greeted, each with a bow.

"Then we may dismiss the 'rikishas," he said, and nodded to the men, who laid down the shafts and disappeared. Dessalines turned to speak to Sir Henry, to Giles, then his eyes rolled and he chuckled as he greeted Leyden.

"Oh, *mon chère docteur*, I suppose you will make me die of laughter again to-day!" He laughed with the irrepressible mirth of a small boy amused in church; it was a laugh which rises suddenly and with explosive

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force just under the soft palate and bursts at the same time through nose and mouth; the laugh of a negro, a child. Leyden smiled, glanced at Virginia, laughed outright, then clapped the Haytian violently upon the shoulder.

"*Tiens camarade!*" his tongue whirled in a short blast of Creole, then joined Dessalines in a light laugh.

The Misses O'Connor had drawn Virginia aside.

"Did ever you see the like of that!" whispered Miss Kathleen. She was a pretty girl in an aggressively healthy way, and richly endowed with hair, color, and teeth. "Is he not the darling?"

"But fancy meeting him of a dark night!" cried Miss O'Connor, in a low voice. She was prettier than her sister and even more vivacious, if that were possible. "I would die of fright entirely!"

"Is he a cannibal, do you think?" whispered the elder, staring at Dessalines with wide, fascinated eyes.

"He's very good-looking, as one gets used to him," declared her sister. "And what an elegant voice!"

"Saints, here he's coming to speak to us!" cried Miss Kathleen. "Now, what ever in the world shall I say to him! Don't leave me, girls."

Dessalines drew near, smiling. Leyden had just complimented him upon the ingenuity of his reception and the Haytian was as pleased as a dog who has just been petted for a well-performed trick. As a matter of fact the French valet, Jules, had devised the details of the *fête*, but with such dexterity that Dessalines was quite convinced that all was the result of his own happy inspiration.

"You must pardon me, ladies, for my lack of chivalry,

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but this dear chap, Leyden . . . his *blagueur* . . . it will be my death! What did you think of the 'rikishas?"

"We were delighted!" exclaimed Virginia.

"You have brought us into Japan!" cried Miss O'Connor. "I am sure that I must be dreaming. Are we really still in England, Count Dessalines?"

"It's the loveliest place that ever I saw!" said Kathleen.

"It is charming," replied Dessalines. "I confess that I hate to leave it, but when I do it will be to go home."

"To Africa?" queried Miss O'Connor.

"No," replied Dessalines shortly. "To Hayti."

"Oh, that is in the South Seas, is it not?" exclaimed Miss Kathleen, proud of her knowledge. "I had a schoolmate from there . . . a lovely French girl, but quite—quite—dark complexioned!" she ended, in a crumbling way.

"You are thinking of Tahiti, Miss O'Connor," said Dessalines, politely. "That is in the South Pacific and belongs to France. Hayti is in the West Indies and belongs to . . . Hayti!" he ended proudly.

CHAPTER IX

DESSALINES' HOUR

LUNCHEON was served in the pagoda above the boathouse; it was correct in every detail, planned by the crowlike Jules, as *major-domo*, and served by the cat-footed Japanese.

"No," said Dessalines, in answer to a question by Sir Henry, "there is nothing in this scene to remind one of Hayti; this is too tempered, too moderate. Our friend Leyden will tell you that Hayti is a place of strong outline, dazzling sunshine, and black shadows . . . but then, you must remember that it is not an old civilization like this, or the Japan which we are aping; Hayti is raw; it is a raw, strong, virile people who inhabit it; also, if our early influence could only have been English instead of French!"

"You might not have got your independence, old chap," said Giles. "Your name might have been that of a martyr, instead of a liberator."

For the first time Virginia saw an expression of real annoyance on the black face.

"England would not have kept us as slaves," answered Dessalines.

"That was well said!" cried Sir Henry warmly. "England would have taught you how to rule yourselves and then——"

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"Put some one on the island to see that you did it," said Leyden dryly.

"Nothing," observed Virginia, "is more ungallant to ladies than to talk politics in their presence." The conversation was turned to lighter topics.

"For your entertainment this afternoon," said Dessalines to Lady Maltby, "I have ordered tea served on the little island a mile up the river. My neighbor, Mr. Radford, has built there a little kiosk which he calls the Temple of Love; he kindly permits me to use it this afternoon for tea."

"That will be charming. And how are we to go?"

"Two of the Japanese will row some of us up in the barge; there is also a canoe in which I had thought that Giles might like to take Miss Moultrie; with Giles outing and exercise are synonyms."

"A chap must keep fit," said Giles.

Virginia felt oddly disappointed; of course it was always a pleasure to be with Giles, but for this one afternoon she wished to watch Dessalines. Her dread of him had given way to a curious interest; she loved to watch the play of the great muscles beneath the light texture of his clothes; there was a peculiar attraction in the rich tones of his voice, and his euphonic phrases and well-chosen words were a never-failing source of surprised interest; it was as if a tiger had glided to her side, purred, and paid a compliment; there was a nightmarish element about Dessalines; he was the perfect figment to haunt one's dreams, yet not in all ways unpleasantly.

"Can the barge carry so many?" she asked.

Dessalines glanced at her quickly. Primitive creature

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that he was his instincts were swift and accurate and he felt that Virginia was not entirely pleased with this arrangement.

"The barge is quite able to carry us," he replied, "but our progress will not be rapid. There are two more canoes, if any of you prefer to go in that way, in which case those who are left can go in a cedar double-ender which is light and fast."

"Oh, that would be much more of a lark!" cried Miss O'Connor.

"I think I prefer the rowboat," said Lady Maltby; "when one is past forty canoes lose their glamour. Why not dispense with the Japanese altogether and let them take the hampers in another boat? I am sure the poor things must be quite exhausted; first they are 'rikishamen, then they are butlers, then they are boatmen, and then they are silvan stewards." She turned to the naturalist. "Are you ready to become athletic for a mile, Leyden, in my service?"

Leyden bowed. "I am ready to become anything in your service, Lady Maltby."

Sir Henry turned to Miss O'Connor. "Would you be willing to trust yourself with me in a canoe, Miss O'Connor?"

"And if I would not, Sir Henry," replied the Irish girl, "I wouldn't trust myself with you anywhere . . . oh, whatever am I saying!"

Virginia was seized with a sudden perverse impulse. It had seemed to her that Giles had been more attentive to Miss O'Connor than the occasion demanded; he was very good to look at, that day; clad in his cream-colored flannels he was the picture of a handsome, well-groomed

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athletic Englishman, and it was rather apparent that Miss O'Connor thought so.

"Then let Giles take Rose," said Virginia, "and Count Dessalines can take me."

Rose O'Connor flushed; Giles looked surprised; the great, mobile face of Dessalines lighted with pleasure; Virginia, catching the expression, half regretted her whimsical suggestion.

The plan was adopted and they embarked with much laughter. Dessalines and Virginia were the last to start, and then the host discovered that the fresh shell-lac of the canoe was still soft from the sun and sent one of the servants for a robe with which to cover it. The others had already rounded the first bend of the river when he shoved the canoe clear of the little jetty.

Their course was up stream, across the miniature lake, along the edge of flower-flecked banks, under the shade of the pollards, skirting the rim of the rushes where the great savage pike, sunning their backs in the shallows, rushed for the deep water, leaving furrowed trails.

Virginia, sitting well forward to balance as much as possible the great weight of Dessalines who knelt slightly abaft the beam, had little regard for the sweetness of the summer day. She was sitting in a loose heap of cushions thrown upon a rug of flaming crimson, the corners of which trailed in the water with an oriental disregard of precision. Dessalines knelt, knees braced well apart to better balance the unstable craft, and the paddle in his hand seemed the toy of a child. His linen shirt was unbuttoned at the neck, and the great cords stood in smooth ridges against the snowy fabric. He had rolled his sleeves over the elbows, and under the black, satiny

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skin the long muscles rippled and slid, the one above the other, in a manner which suggested the undulations of a snake beneath the sheeny surface of a pool. He had thrown his cap into the bottom of the canoe and his kinky hair glistened in the sunshine, the rays of which beat so powerlessly upon the dome of the thick African skull.

Virginia was silent for a moment, fluttered ; the potentiality of the man's great physique burst upon her afresh and with an unmitigated impulse. At each occasion upon which this physical predominance had forced itself upon her, it had done so with a sense of shock ; many things in nature had affected her in a somewhat similar way : swift motion, as in a motor car, a lavish sunset, a bullfight which she had once witnessed in Madrid, but none of these approached the impulse emanating from Dessalines.

Suddenly she realized that he was a *man*—a living, breathing man, thinking as other men think, more primitive perhaps—and at the thought of the sentient liveness of this great machine she forgot Leyden and his theories and their demonstration . . . lost sight of her own superior mentality, and was filled suddenly with a wild sense of panic ; became a timorous woman, cornered, trapped, casting about wild eyed for some avenue of escape.

In a half dozen long, powerful strokes which sent the eddies sucking and swirling for yards in their wake, Dessalines drove the canoe far into the middle of the stream. He looked up at Virginia, crouching in the bow, facing him ; virile, primitive creature that he was, he received the impulses emanating from her as a lion

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would read fear in the calm face of the tamer, and all the brute in him was suddenly cognizant of its power; and all the brute in him seemed to contract its great powerful flank muscles and shoot straight out, clawing at the sunshine, exulting in its untrammelled strength. There crept into his resonant voice a *timbre* against which Virginia's tone struck flat and drab.

All of this before a word had been spoken; Virginia, feeling her resistance infinitesimal, yet came of a fighting stock; slowly her spirit rallied in revolt against the insidious usurpation of her individuality. Words are less dangerous than the silence of insecurity, also, most animals fear the human voice. She began to talk, with no effort to convey thought or assert herself, but merely to talk . . . to be an active power.

"You are accustomed to this, Count Dessalines? You seem quite at home in a canoe, and when one considers your weight and that of the vessel, it is extraordinary that you should handle it so easily."

Dessalines smiled one of the swift, flashing smiles which had more than once startled Virginia.

"I have never been in a canoe until coming here. Perhaps it is heredity; perhaps because my ancestors were Kongos . . . paddled for generations in canoes scooped out from logs!" He dipped the broad blade of the paddle and, with a heave so strong yet so even and coördinate that the trim of the canoe was not altered, sent the light craft flying through the water.

Virginia did not answer at once; instead, she leaned back and watched him through several repeated strokes and noted how at each output of massive force the wide nostrils dilated, the black brows came down in corruga-

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tions, and the great lungs expanded in the rhythmic function of supplying oxygen to the furnaces of this great human machine. Predominant among African traits is a sense of rhythm; an accurate perception of *tempo*, and this perfect periodicity of applied energy is one of the most difficult influences for even the high mentality to resist. There is a saying in dynamics that a dog trotting across an iron trestle will break it down; so Virginia, watching Dessalines as he swung to the paddle with strokes which seemed to lift the buoyant craft almost from the water, and listening to the rhythm of his respiration, all in perfect time, found herself moving, thinking, feeling in accord. They soon passed Giles, laboring up stream with strong, awkward strokes; next overtook Sir Henry who had been the first to start; then they passed Lady Maltby and Leyden, and the next bend of the river found them out of sight of the others.

Dessalines' strokes swept on with unabated power. His gaze, resting on Virginia, became to her insupportable.

"You will tire yourself out," she said with an effort.

The Haytian laughed, low, rich, gurgling. "It is very rarely that I tire; you know my race is famed for its physical endurance."

Virginia was surprised, for in common with most people she had always felt that a negro would be embarrassed at a reference to his race; she had observed several times, and with pleasure, that Dessalines seemed proud of it.

"Are Haytians then so enduring, Count Dessalines?"

"Haytians?" He laughed again. "Oh, no! I was not referring to them, but to the negro race. You know,

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Miss Moultrie, we are quite extraordinary in our capacity for sustained physical effort, especially on very little nourishment." His oddly tinted eyes rested upon her; their expression altered; from being savage, exulting, dominating, they became brooding, thoughtful. "Do you know, Miss Moultrie, I often think that at one time, perhaps thousands of years ago, we may have been a people of marvelous achievement. It is the history of the world that in time all great races become decadent; go down, down, down to the lowest rung of human existence, enter the valley of the shadow and there abide indefinitely until it is time to reëmerge and begin the ascent again. My race is now far down the scale, yet see how readily it responds to civilizing influences. Is there any other people who have stepped at one stride from pagan influence to civilization? whose aims are always like ours, toward elevation? Consider the degrading influences through which we passed in slavery, and yet consider, if you please, how we have risen when the opportunity has been presented."

"In Hayti?" asked Virginia innocently.

Dessalines' face grew almost savage in expression. "Ah, no! because there the transition from slavery to mastery has been too swift; it should have been from slavery to liberty, and from liberty to mastery. In Hayti all is greed and avarice, the ownership by a few and jealousy of outsiders and of each other. White people are regarded with suspicion and distrust; the Haytians of my class foolishly insist that we are the superiors of the whites."

"How very odd!" exclaimed Virginia, her tact lost in surprise.

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"And yet not altogether," replied Dessalines. "Considering that most of the whites with whom we come in contact are not pure white, but half-caste; the yellow population of Santo Domingo. Do you not think, Miss Moultrie,"—the powerful strokes continued rhythmically and the sonorous voice seemed to time itself to the effort,—“do you not think that social equality is less a matter of race than individual?” The great black face was pathetic in its eagerness; there was a note of appeal in the vibrant voice. Virginia was suddenly touched. Dessalines as an animal was magnificent; Dessalines pleading was strangely pitiful.

"I think," she answered gently, "that social equality is less a condition than a name; that the individual of any race who is clean souled, charitable, and true to himself is the peer of any."

The great negro features seemed suddenly illumined. "It is so that I have thought," he answered. "It was for the grounding of these broad principles that I came to England, . . . and I shall, God willing, go back fully armed with Knowledge with which to drive my people to the light!"

"Would it not be better to lead them?" asked Virginia.

"No, Miss Moultrie; they have not yet reached a point where they can be led; they must still be driven. A republic in such a country as Hayti, with such a people, is absurd, a mockery, an object of ridicule to foreigners; the best thing for Hayti is a *king*." The great head suddenly came high, the flat nostrils dilated, the eyes widened, and the white teeth flashed. "A king!" thundered Dessalines, his vision focused far beyond the

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girl; and as he repeated the word the paddle snapped in his great hand; he pitched slightly backward, recovering his balance with the lithe swing of a cat. "*Mon dieu!* I have broken the paddle; but, no matter, there is another in the canoe."

Virginia was strongly moved.

"And you would be king?" she asked breathlessly. Dessalines as a king, the savage king of a savage island! Nothing could be more appropriate.

His great blue-black eyes flashed up toward her with an expression almost ferocious.

"I have not said that . . . !" His quick animal instinct read the admiration in her eyes to which his negro blood could not fail to respond. "I have not said it," he repeated less roughly.

"It would be safe with me," replied Virginia.

"Ah, of that I am sure," he answered swiftly, "and if I were king, Miss Moultrie, do you know what my first act would be?"

"No," replied Virginia, slightly drawing back and oddly stirred at something in the expression of the great, black, mobile face.

"It would be this: to place upon the throne at my side a *white* queen; a woman of consequence, well born, preferably Anglo-Saxon; and to encourage intermarriage with the better class of whites with both sexes of the aristocracy of my country. It is only by intermarriage that my people can be raised above the stigma with which the world views them. It is my belief that ages ago, before the Fall, before we were driven howling to the antipodes, we may have been a white race; that our difference of somatic type, physical differences,

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simply accompanied this early degeneration; in time we might regenerate back to a higher type, but it fatigues the brain to consider how long a time this might require. Is it not better to make an exchange of our virile qualities with a race of less stamina, but higher culture?"

"But," said Virginia, fighting the emotion, the shock with which his words inspired her, "did you not just say that you objected to mulattoes?"

"Ah, yes, that is true; I do object to the illegitimate, low-caste type. You must understand, Miss Moultrie, that according to existing circumstances mulattoes are in almost every case a class of illegitimates; if bred from the best blood of both races I see no reason why they should not be a grand people; a class strong, intelligent, and desirable to any nation . . . a class which would represent a bond uniting black and white, a mutual affiliation"—the euphonic words rolled out sonorously—"for our two races!"

The ringing voice, the black, inspired face, thrilled Virginia. The flowing rhetoric was like a chant, a pæan, a prophecy. She knew little of these things; she had always thought of mulattoes as a wretched class, physically deficient, morally lacking, mentally freakish; also, she had a vague idea that they were hybrid. Dessalines frightened but excited her; prudence bade her stop his peroration, even while her inclination was all for hearing more.

"Why should we be an alien people?" pursued Dessalines, "herded by ourselves; classed, less through malice than ignorance, almost with the lower animals? Why should we be denied the privileges allowed to Indian, Oriental, Turk, or Slav? Are we not capable of

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equal attainments? Am I not the peer of any man physically, mentally, spiritually?" The massive chest swelled; the eyes seemed to protrude, while their rims of white widened; the flat nostrils dilated. "Tell me, Miss Moultrie," he leaned slightly toward her, "is there any reason why I should not take a white woman—an English woman, a woman of good birth—to be my wife if I should ever succeed in becoming the king of Hayti?"

Virginia was unable to speak, to think, to take her fascinated eyes from the eager face. After a time she spoke; answered him in some way which made no impression on either, for her own mind was chaotic and Dessalines' had sunk into a brooding apathy.

The rest of the day was hazy to Virginia. Giles claimed the privilege of paddling her back, as Virginia dimly suspected at a hint from Leyden, whose clear eyes she had attempted to avoid. She resented the gaze of the naturalist; she felt him to be biased, unfair, cold blooded, a trifle cruel.

Virginia slept ill that night; visions of Dessalines threw dark shadows athwart her dreams. Two days later he called; several times he rode with Giles and herself. Giles's friendliness toward the Haytian was in no degree diminished, but once or twice when her *fiancé* was performing some little office for her Virginia had surprised upon the face of Dessalines an expression which shocked and frightened her.

The Haytian joined her one day when she was alone in the gardens; he was supposedly in search of Giles. Virginia was gathering flowers for the luncheon table when his grotesque shadow fell across the rose bushes over which she stooped.

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"They told me at the house that I would find some one in the garden"—his voice was like the purr of a well-fed tiger—"but I see only flowers."

Virginia raised herself, flushed, breathless, startled. It was the first time that Dessalines had ventured to pay her a direct compliment. It gave her something of the sensation one might feel if, while wandering in a tropical jungle, a tiger were to slip from the striped shadows, fall at one's feet, and lick the hand with a rough tongue.

"It is evident that the French influence has made itself felt in Hayti," said Virginia lightly, for by this time Dessalines had lost much of his emotional excitement for her, although still holding an odd, negative attraction.

"It is to-day that I have first appreciated its advantage," said Dessalines. "There are many things which I have only commenced to appreciate lately." He looked fixedly at Virginia, who turned away breathless, nervous, dreading, yet perversely attracted at the thought of a confidence, the thought of being shown the dark, hidden recesses of this sinister soul. "You have taught me much, Miss Moultrie."

"I am glad," said Virginia feebly. "I also have learned much from you; you have given me a valuable impression of your race—its lost grandeur and its possibilities. I—I—shall follow your career with interest and sympathy."

Dessalines' metallic eyes flashed; with a quick gesture he caught the girl's hand, bent down from his great height, and brushed it with his lips.

At that moment Manning and Leyden entered the garden from the far end.

CHAPTER X

LEYDEN'S ANALYSIS

I NEVER thought," said Manning bitterly, "that I would have to take my sister from England to Carolina to avoid the familiarity of a nigger! But what is a man to do? Frenchmen are bad enough . . . niggers are worse; when you get the two combined in one big, hulking buck who ought to be building rice dikes, instead of sitting around in drawing-rooms, reeking with French perfumery . . . isn't that just about the limit of endurance, Dr. Leyden?"

Leyden laughed softly.

Manning resumed, his cold voice edged with anger. "Yet what else can I do? He's received over here, he's an Oxonian, he is rich and a friend and classmate of Giles, and he has saved his life and that of my sister; one can't snub him with decency." And Manning swore a fervid Carolinian oath. "To think that a sister of mine . . . a Moultrie, should find anything beyond a curious interest in a great big pampered lump of an African nigger . . . once worth a thousand dollars and to-day, thanks to the meddling Yankees, not worth a d——!" Again Manning mounted heights of classic objurgatory.

Leyden had been an interested audience to this monologue. He liked Manning, or, more properly, he liked to be with Manning. Few people really liked Manning

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Moultrie, but fewer still disliked his company. It was the cold-bloodedness of Manning which most appealed to Leyden; there are few fascinations equal to that of attractive cold-bloodedness, and Manning was attractive mentally, physically, and immorally.

Virginia had culled all of the emotional ingredients of their heritage, barring perhaps anger. One could look at Virginia and see, young as she was, where passions suppressed had carved their initials upon the wall of their prison; in Manning they either beat their heads against the walls or were coldly set at liberty.

"Are you growling, Moultrie?" asked Leyden, with his quiet smile, "or asking advice?" The naturalist was chary of unsolicited personalities; bountiful at the request of his friends.

"Both," said Manning. "What do you think I should do? I've got to go back to Carolina, but I can't go back and leave this here brute messing about."

"Why not take Miss Moultrie with you?" asked Leyden.

"The place would bore her horribly; our plantation is on the Caw Caw Swamp; we have no near neighbors. Of course she might stay in Charleston, but that would be stupid for her; in any case she would have to remain in the North until autumn; the rice belt is rotten with fever. You see, Leyden, I have an idea that it will take a good deal of a man to hold my sister's affections; Giles is a fine chap, but he is young and not especially subtle. I am very anxious for this marriage to take place, for I am sure that once married they will be very happy, and I am afraid that if I take her so far away something may come up to interfere with the match."

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"They are to be married in January, are they not? Then why not take Miss Moultrie away for a few months and persuade Giles to give up the hunting and join you there. It will not take much argument on your part, I fancy."

Manning's face brightened. "That is a good thought. Giles had agreed to go home with me when I first came over, and then backed out . . . I fancy he did not care for the separation. . . ." His features clouded again. "Can you tell me why it is, Dr. Leyden, that a woman of my sister's position and engaged to be married to a fine fellow like Giles Maltby should be interested in a brute like this Dessalines? I am a good deal biased I'll admit, and you are thoroughly cosmopolitan. Do you think that this Haytian is so different from any other negro?"

"No," replied Leyden quietly. "I do not believe that this Haytian possesses the brain of a very ignorant white person, although he has no doubt developed such brain as he has almost to its physiological limits, which places him, of course, for all practical purposes, the mental superior of the ignorant white."

Manning looked annoyed. "I would much prefer to think that it was the oddity, the striking element of mentality in the man by which my sister was attracted. Why, confound it, doctor, it is evident enough that she is attracted, and if not by his mentality it must be . . . *b-r-r-rgh!*" Manning rose hastily and lit a cigar, then turned suddenly to Leyden, his fine aristocratic face white and fierce.

"My soul, doctor! if any man had ever hinted, implied by the shadow of insinuation, such a thing of my

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sister as I have just *said*, I would shoot him on sight. Just why I am telling it all to you I'm sure I don't know. There's no other man living to whom I would breathe such a thing; perhaps it's because you have told me things . . . it's because you know your world as no man living whom I ever met before, and I want your advice."

Manning's face was drawn and haggard; young as he was he did not open his soul without breaking certain seals and wrenching his whole fabric to its core. This stifling of his pride had in it something submissive; it was simply that he had fallen beneath the influence of the world wisdom of this man who wandered up and down, looking, seeing, observing, dispassionately analyzing, quietly placing startling truths upon their proper shelves, sticking labels on heart beats, compassionate, kind, with the large-heartedness of deep understanding and the stamp of an ineradicable pain which had purified his soul and set him apart from selfish interest with those affairs which he might be asked to arbitrate.

Leyden studied the fire, for there was a damp drizzle without and the hall was cold and draughty. He pushed a log with his toe, poked another into place, crouched on the hearth, resting on his heels—the aboriginal position acquired by one who lives much in the open; his fine face was rather more flushed than the backset of heat would warrant.

"*Ach!*" he said, "this Channel weather, with its cold and fog and rain!" He clapped his hands absently, waited, clapped again, glanced vexedly over his shoulder, then laughed. "Will you ring the bell, Moultrie?"

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It is at your elbow. I forget that I am in the land of electricity. *Ach*, but these English servants are deliberate! Wiggin, have you any rum?"

Manning started, glanced over his shoulder. Keen as were his own senses he had failed to hear the approach of the felt-shod butler.

"There is some of the Santa Cruz which you sent from the West Injies last May, sir."

"Evidently it is not a popular beverage; so much the better. Bring me a gill, Wiggin; and Wiggin, will you be so good as to look on the dressing table in my room and bring me the green bottle which you will find there; also, some water and the half of a lemon. I beg your pardon, Moultrie; I am going to bore you directly, and before beginning I wish to fortify myself against a fight which is to occur in my blood vessels"—he glanced at the tall clock—"in precisely four hours and fifteen minutes."

"What do you mean?" asked Manning. "Are you ill?" He had at first been inclined to resent Leyden's neglect of his direct question; then he had been puzzled, and when one is puzzled one is apt to try to solve the query before indulging in other emotions.

"No," said Leyden lightly. "There is a chill due in four hours, and I think that with the aid of some very excellent rum which Sir Henry does not properly appreciate and a preparation of my own I may be able to abort it. It is this vile weather . . . but, so much for that!" He assembled the charred logs, blew upon an ember, kindled the whole into a blaze, raised himself, lightly as a cat, from his knee-strained position, and turned to Manning.

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"You have asked my counsel, but before giving it I must explain certain things." His voice became rhythmic, the voice of a pedagogue, a professor. "You mention with horror the idea of this Haytian exercising any physical attraction for Miss Moultrie; you wish that it were mental, spiritual, psychical—a lovely word, by the way, and much in vogue with those wishing to describe what they cannot understand. My dear fellow, you should let well enough alone! If it were anything but the physical which attracted your sister it would be a matter for the deepest regret."

"I do not agree with you!" interrupted Manning sulkily.

"There is no especial reason why you should," pursued Leyden calmly. "All I ask is that you follow me. I say that this attraction is properly physical." He raised his hand warningly. "Man, I know what I am saying; have you never seen a woman stand fascinated in front of the cage of a tiger when the brute is exercising himself, going through his paces? This is a purely physical attraction; I fear from your words that your vocabulary is inaccurate. By physical attraction one does not necessarily imply a—now do not misunderstand me again—sexual. A physical attraction may be defined as the attraction of cell for cell, fiber for fiber, nerve for nerve; an attraction which may go no higher than the spinal cord, a reflex sympathy; or, when it does go higher, what then? It is the joy of one vigorous vitality in another.

"To make myself more plain, there are certain inherent qualities in certain entities which may call to like qualities in another, entirely ex-intellect. Every human

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being possesses certain impulses, spiritual and physical. To both of these there is a vague force, called, for lack of a better word 'magnetism,' which, unlike that peculiar to the poles of an electric magnet, serves not to neutralize, but tends rather to a diffusion which results in the establishing of an equilibrium. An individual possessing an excess of the spiritual calls loudly for the other complementary quality to bring its physical up to the level of its spiritual; calls unconsciously and aside from all reasoning; in other words, *craves*."

Leyden paused, placed the tips of his fingers together; the man had beautiful hands, the hands of a gentleman who uses them and his brain.

"Thank you, Wiggin," he remarked without looking around. "You may place them on the table." Leyden stared into the fire . . . seemed to be following the flow of his thought as the eager draught sucked it into the flames. "I am a poor talker," he observed; "possibly you do not follow me!"

Manning writhed uneasily, reached down, shoved his chair back with a gasp of pain. He had not realized that his knees were scorching; there was an odor of burnt wool. He swore a soft, warm oath; oaths and tobacco were Manning's most affected vices.

"Not entirely," he said, "your distinctions are too fine, too subtle, for a practical person like myself." "Practical" is the term by which people lacking in imagination define their lack of this quality. "If a powerful physical attraction is neither love nor lust then it is something which I do not understand."

"That also is possible," said Leyden sharply. The assumption of this young man to a right to knowledge

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which can only come of years and men annoyed him. "It is just that quality, that something which you do not understand, that I am attempting to define for you. Let us go back to the woman watching the caged tiger, or, for that matter, a feeble-chested man exulting in a prize fight will do; both attractions are purely physical. It is the fascination of dynamic force, and the finer the mastery of this force the greater the fascination. A strong man is more imposing than a falling tree. Have you never been fascinated by watching a great mechanism—a locomotive, a steel hammer, the engines of a liner when the ship is racing, and one feeble man with his hand on the throttle controls the rotation of tons and tons of steel? You are a horseman; have you never been thrilled at the beat and throb of your hunter's great shoulder muscles as they swelled and contracted between your knees?"

Manning's hard, patrician face suddenly lighted, and Leyden, watching narrowly, saw that he had struck the responsive note. He walked to the table, poured a bit of the solution from the green bottle into a glass, added rum, a dash of water, squeezed in a few drops of the lemon, stirred the whole with a pocket thermometer, drank it, and glanced at his watch. He returned to the fire and stood, his strong shoulders against the stone carving of the chimney, facing Manning.

"Do you understand? do you see what I mean? how it would be an injustice to Miss Moultrie to suppose this attraction anything but physical. If you do I shall go deeper, just for this once. It is a subject which is better discussed but once—disposed of at one sitting. Such things, like your color question in the United States,

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grow and flourish with the reek and the stink of a carnivorous plant in an atmosphere of argument."

"Please go on," said Manning. There was a new note of respect in his voice.

"We must go a step farther, to be honest analysts. While this attraction is, as I have said, in its origin a matter of the spinal cord as distinct from the brain, the latter is bound in time to become conscious of its presence; just as the master of a house will discover, in time, that he is entertaining an unmasked guest who may be harbored by other members of his household. The brain then says, 'who have we here?' and subjects this tenant to scrutiny, and it is here that the danger lies, for one of two things will happen: the brain, never infallible, and to my mind rather a feeble substitute for unerring instincts, either ejects this inmate as undesirable or else raises him to the position of honored guest. A primitive emotion will not, as a rule, put muscles in motion until passed upon and approved by a bombastic brain, which is the snobbish element of one's cosmos." He glanced at Manning.

"In other words," said Manning, "you mean that an attraction of this sort is harmless and natural until the person begins to analyze, and tries to adjust the emotions?"

"Precisely. Take the present instance for example. Miss Moultrie is physically attracted by this Haytian; there is no harm in that, but soon she will say: 'Why does this man attract me? He is black, he is brutal, he is grotesque, yet he does attract me. Why? It must be that beneath all of this there is a subtle quality which I can feel but not see; that there is intellectual force,

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spirituality, a soul!'—and from this she will build up and endow this creature with qualities which he does not possess, because, having the usual ideas on such subjects, she is unwilling to admit that a mere physical attraction could so powerfully control her. And now, my dear fellow, that is all for to-day, and you may think about it, and if you agree with me, you will persuade Miss Moultrie to return with you next week to Charleston, for you may rest assured that this Dessalines will follow her all over Europe, now that he thinks that he has awakened her interest."

Leyden walked to the oriel window, drummed on the leaded pane, whistled a snatch of doggerel, then glanced over his shoulder to where Manning sat deep in his reflections.

"As far as Count Dessalines is concerned," said he, "you will have to draw your own conclusions; this should not be difficult."

A fortnight later Virginia sailed with Manning on the *Eutopia*.

CHAPTER XI

A SUMMONS

IT was a golden day toward the end of July; Giles had dropped in at Dessalines' cottage while riding, and they were sitting in the pagoda on the edge of the little lake.

"You must have been working very hard, Aristide," said Giles. "We haven't seen a sign of you since the Moultries left. Don't wonder you want to get away . . . must be a deuced bore plugging along here all by yourself at all this rot!" He glanced at the book which the Haytian had laid down at his approach: "'Psychologie des Foules'! Jove! pretty solid for a day like this—what?"

"It is intensely interesting, Giles. Leyden recommended it; it is just the sort of stuff I need, as the success of my work will depend a great deal upon my comprehension of the popular mind."

"The pater wishes you to dine with us before you go; he wondered that you hadn't been over, but I told him that you were hard at work. Are you going directly to Hayti?"

"No," replied Dessalines slowly, "I am going first to New York; there are some matters of business to be looked after and," his eyes lighted, "I wish to see the place."

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"You don't mean to say that you have never been to New York?"

Dessalines' face lowered, became sinister, cruel. "But once, simply to transship. It was the first time that I went to Europe; I was not well treated in New York—" Again he glanced away, and a faint rim of white was all that Giles could see of the brooding eyes. "I was very young, fifteen, perhaps; it was the first time that I had ever been away from the island. We are a peculiar people in Hayti, Giles; I do not to this day know who gave me birth. I never knew a mother, but my father was afterwards the President of Hayti and immensely rich; he was rich at that time, although few knew it, and I grew up in an atmosphere not of luxury as you know it, for Hayti is crude, but taught to believe myself inferior to none. The people about me were my slaves; I had everything. I firmly believed my people to be the greatest on earth; Hayti the garden spot of the world; myself destined to be a power in Hayti; for you see, Giles, my father recognized early that I was the superior of those about me; he was ambitious for me and he needed me to aid in carrying out a long-formed project."

Giles had listened, absorbed, embarrassed at first and uncomfortable at Dessalines' reference to things the mere hint of which was a matter of shame and anger to an Anglo-Saxon. Dessalines' origin had never occurred to him; had been shrouded in the vague glamour of strangeness and mystery which seemed to envelop the man. If he had thought of the matter at all, Giles might have imagined the Haytian's father as the half-naked chief of a cannibal tribe and his mother as an African

princess abducted in some savage foray. It was not the lack of convention which shocked Giles's sense of propriety, it was the presence of any convention at all.

Dessalines was brooding dejectedly when Giles, embarrassed and a trifle uncomfortable, interrupted.

"But about that matter in New York, Aristide; what happened to you?"

"Ah, yes; I was about to tell you. I had come from Hayti with these ideas, and there was nothing in my treatment on the voyage to New York to prepare me for what was to follow. On landing I took a cab and told the driver to go to the Windsor Hotel. Even at that time my English was fairly good, for as a child I had been cared for by a woman from Jamaica who taught me the language—" Dessalines arose suddenly, threw out both great arms, clinched his fists, and strode across the pagoda; and when he turned, with the body sling of a caged tiger, Giles shrank back instinctively. The wide nostrils were distended, the thick lips drawn back in a grimace which bared the white teeth, the low forehead was corrugated; but most appalling of all was the sinister looming of the whole great figure, the poise of the head downward and forward, the elbow-bent hang of the long arms.

"*Tonnerre les écrase!*" thundered the tremendous voice. And then, as the rolling eyes, the whites of which were most conspicuous, fell upon Giles there was a change, almost as startling as the first. Something in the blank expression of the ruddy-faced Englishman, an imbecile expression of astonished dismay, a drop to the jaw, the startled stare of the eyes, pulled quickly at the hair trigger of the negro risibilities. The savagery was

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swept from Dessalines in a breath; throwing back his great head he exploded with laughter.

Giles, uncomfortable, vexed, puzzled, stared at him resentfully.

"Don't be angry, Giles; I lose my temper each time I think of the indignities"—the shadow fell again—"but the expression of your face was—amusing." The broad smile swept away the shadow which returned on the instant. "I will not tell you what happened, Giles; it is enough to say that I was outraged, insulted, humiliated from the time that I set foot upon the gang plank to go ashore; and at last I was maddened. My race develops early, Giles, and even at that age I was physically powerful and had never been taught the necessity of controlling my temper. You can imagine the result. I was in jail, bruised and bleeding, before I had been an hour ashore."

The expression of savagery returned. This time Giles understood, although, being an Englishman, he was unable to conceive the conditions which would attend a negro in Dessalines' position in the New York of fifteen years before.

"Fortunately I had plenty of money," said Dessalines, "so I sent for the captain of the steamer, a friend of my father's, and he straightened matters with the authorities. The municipal administration of New York being no different from that of Hayti it was only a question of money enough to set me at liberty. The following day I sailed on the French steamer, and since then when I have crossed it has been always by the French mail from Martinique."

"But I fancy you must have been a bit cheeky,

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brought up as you were," said Giles. "They'd hardly bait a man in New York just because his skin happened to be black; besides, there are lots of your people there."

"Very true, but at that time all of these occupied menial positions, made no pretense of any social equality, and, in fact, it was but a year or two before my going there that they were permitted to ride in the same trams with the whites; all of that is changed now."

"It was not altogether unnatural, when you think of it," replied Giles. "Consider what the liberation of your people from slavery had cost the States but a few years before; it is not to be wondered at that they were a bit sore with the whole race. They could not understand the view point of a Haytian."

"All that is changed to-day," said Dessalines. "That is, it is changed in the North. Negroes are now admitted everywhere, I understand, just as they are in England. I do not anticipate any difficulty in this direction, because not only are the conditions changed, but I am older and more a man of the world. By the way"—there was the faintest alteration in the *timbre* of the voice which seemed to grow softer, richer, more unctuous—"what do you hear from Miss Moultrie?"

A swift shadow crossed Giles's face.

"She is in New York," he answered, a trifle shortly; "or at least she was. I believe that she is now in a place called Manchester, near Boston; she was going there first, to visit some friends."

"She will not go South until the autumn?" asked Dessalines.

"I believe not." There was a curtness to Giles's

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tone. "I must be off," he added, rising. "Will you dine with us Thursday next, Aristide?"

"With pleasure, Giles." Dessalines arose and walked with him to the miniature stable, led out the horse, and stood at his head as Giles mounted, then watched him long and thoughtfully as he cantered down the drive; the black face was brooding, morose, moping.

A sudden sharp noise smote his ear; turning swiftly he saw that a fox-terrier pup, given him some weeks before by Giles, in trotting about the corner of the house had run unexpectedly upon a large cat which had sprung at him, spitting. *Ki-yi-yi!* yelped the puppy, as it fled, ears back, eyes wide with terror, tail snugly tucked between its fat legs.

Dessalines roared with laughter, slapped his thigh, rocked back and forth in a gust of uncontrollable mirth; then threw himself upon the grass and rolled, still roaring.

That night Dessalines read late; he was fond of reading. By choice he preferred subjects thoughtful, elegantly written with floreate rhetoric and high-sounding phrases, but elementary and simple in principle. Let a thought be subtle, abstruse, combined, attendant upon something previously or later demonstrated and the broad, black forehead would wrinkle, the mouth draw down, the slightly protruding eyes would grow vacant, confused. Sometimes the effort to cerebrate would develop a sensation of physical pain beneath the heavy temporal bones, and before long he would throw down the book, growl, pick it up again, make another effort, then rise suddenly and if the day was fair, order his horse, deciding that his brain was overworked, unwilling

to acknowledge that it was simply *overtaxed*. On the other hand, let a subject be broad, simple, voluble, but expressed directly in words chosen for brevity without regard to style or euphony, and Dessalines would throw the book aside in disgust. "The man does not know how to write!" he would exclaim. "He has no vocabulary; one would think that he was writing a child's primer! Here is an entire paragraph without a single well-sounding word . . . *tiens!* there is nothing instructive in such a book!" These monologues were usually carried on aloud; negrolike he was given to audible self-communication. Perhaps it crystallized thoughts otherwise vague; the habit of talking aloud in the primitive nature is equivalent to the need of pencil and paper to record arithmetical calculations in the higher one; some other sense, visual, auditory, is called in to assist the insufficient brain cells.

A few days later Giles called to bring Dessalines a book in which he thought he would be interested—"The Races of Man," by Denniker. He found the Haytian in the pagoda, his favorite retreat. Dessalines held a letter in his hand and his great black face was troubled, dazed—wore the look which came to him when wrestling with a problem beyond the grasp of his strong but simple mentality. The vexed expression vanished as his eyes fell upon his friend.

"The very man I most wanted to see!" He sprang up, radiant, dilating with welcome. Something in the jubilant attitude reminded Giles for the instant of the behavior of his Danes when he loosed them for their morning romp; if Dessalines had possessed a tail he would have wagged it violently.

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"Giles, I want your advice; can you spare half an hour?"

"Certainly, old chap; fire away." Giles had advised Dessalines before, in regard to matters of etiquette, dress, English social customs, in all of which the Haytian had proved a quick and apt pupil.

The black face clouded again; he glanced at the letter which he held, and began to mumble the words as if seeking to impress something upon his mind. His brow furrowed, he raised one huge hand to the kinky scalp—the action of a perplexed schoolboy; finally he looked up with an expression of despair.

"I'll have to begin at the very start, if you don't mind," he said.

"Right," said Giles, pulling out his cigarette case.

"When you were here the other day," began Dessalines slowly, "I told you something of my personal history. . . ." He paused. Giles moved uneasily; he had not anticipated the resumption of a subject which had been disagreeable to him. Dessalines leaned back, brought together the tips of his thick fingers, stared down at the lake, and continued in his heavy, hollow-mouthed negro voice.

"I told you that my father was a man high in Haytian politics; also of his ambitions for me. Some weeks ago I received a letter from him in which he informed me that there was approaching an important political crisis in Hayti; that he—eh—that President Sam would probably abdicate in August, and that as a result there would be several adverse factions striving for the presidency."

Giles looked infinitely relieved; he had feared that

he was to be called upon to listen to further items of family history. Britishlike he was shy of looking at a man's naked past; he disliked personal confidences, as do all men strong enough to keep their troubles to themselves. Politics interested him; his career was to be political. His face showed his added interest, and Dessalines, seeing his change of expression, grew himself more confident.

"The government of Hayti as it now exists," he resumed, "is unstable; it cannot stand; there is no credit; everything is running down. The people are dissatisfied, the powers thoroughly so. If President McKinley is reelected it will only be a question of months before Hayti is assimilated by the United States. Such a people cannot be held together as a republic; all of my knowledge of my race, all that I have learned in my reading confirms this view. Hayti must be an empire, an acknowledged autocracy; a theoretical autocracy, instead of merely the practical one which it is to-day."

Giles nodded. Dessalines, inspired by his own eloquence, went on rapidly; he spoke well.

"My father understands this; he is a very clever man; also, as I have told you, he is very rich. He is himself too old to found the dynasty of which he might be the head, yet it is his intention to found one."

Giles leaned forward eagerly, eyes wide with excitement, cheeks flushed. "And he wishes you—you—to. . . ."

Dessalines arose suddenly to his full height, chest expanded, massive head high, nostrils dilated.

"To be *Empereur de Haiti!*" he cried in his resonant voice. This voice, the pose, the great savage stature

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of the man, all impressed Giles powerfully; sent quivers down his spine; excited him.

"*Dessalines!*"

"Yes, Giles, Dessalines the Second, Emperor of Hayti!" The negro voice choked with emotion inspired by his own words. He folded his arms across his broad chest and stared out across the lake. It is probable that for the moment his thoughts were negative; he was all emotion and appearance.

He resumed quietly, still standing. Dessalines disliked to sit.

"To this end, my father has been making preparations in Hayti while I have been preparing myself over here. Through an agent named Rosenthal, a Jew, a white man, but brave and clever, he has been secretly securing recruits for my cause from many points on the island of Hayti. Rosenthal is to purchase a vessel, properly armed and equipped, which will serve the double purpose of transport for the troops and man-of-war; the only armed vessel of any importance now belonging to Hayti is the *Crête-à-Pierrot*, commanded by a renegade Scotchman or Irishman, Admiral Killik. As soon as Rosenthal has completed his preparations, the President will abdicate—then I will strike!"

Giles leaned forward quickly, then checked himself. "Go on!" he said eagerly.

"In the confusion which will follow the abdication, it should be easy, for an able general equipped as I shall be, to step in and seize the loose reins of government . . . well?" He raised his voice in impatient interrogation; his French valet was hurrying up the steps of the pavilion. "Why do you interrupt me, Jules?"

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"A cablegram for M. le Comte——"

Dessalines started as if the man had struck him; his shoulders seemed to shrivel, his eyes to bulge; their whites became conspicuous. Giles had never before witnessed the phenomenon of a negro turning pale; he stared, amazed at the ashen hue of the Haytian's face.

Dessalines waved his hand feebly to Giles.

"Open it please, my friend. Open it and—read it to me." His voice was husky, the articulation thick.

With a pounding heart Giles took the cablegram from the hand of the valet, ripped it open, and read:

"Sam abdicated. Expect you French steamer. ROSENTHAL."

CHAPTER XII

JULES, "THE RAVEN"

GILES looked up with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes. Dessalines was still standing, leaning against a post, his great shoulders drooping, head pitched forward, mouth slightly agape; there was a dull, dazed, troubled look in his blue-black eyes, and the thick skin across his forehead was furrowed. The trained but primitive brain was striving to grasp the countless problems contained in that simple slip of paper; dazed, bewildered before the contemplation of the numberless tasks, conditions, responsibilities with which he found himself suddenly beset.

Giles, glancing up at him, misinterpreted the expression. He accepted it as one of deep and powerful thought; he felt suddenly shy, as such a nature does in the presence of an intimate, personal crisis.

He moved slightly. Dessalines' dull, lack-luster eyes fell upon him; the sable face cleared and the brain, with a mental sigh at the relief of the pressure, flew back to the present, to words, which with the negro are so essential to the crystallizing of a thought.

"Ah, Giles, it has come; this paper!" He took it from Giles's hand. "Think, my friend, what it represents; it is a call, a summons; the appeal of a groping people." The ring of the great voice, inspiring to Giles was likewise inspiring to Dessalines. "The time has

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come, Giles ; sooner than I expected, it is true, but none the less welcome !” The black face, but a moment before so sunk in dejection, began to beam, the rich voice to choke with an emotion inspired of his words. “ Hayti—Hayti—how little you realize that your deliverance is at hand ! ”

Giles, powerfully stirred, looked up with glowing eyes. He felt that he had been caught up in the wheels of destiny, carried along by the juggernaut of history. He was very young ; also, one could scarcely blame him for being stirred in the presence of that great vitality, rich, inspiring voice, powerful emotion. Yet his British practicality did not desert him.

“ Are you ready, Aristide ? ” he asked eagerly. The exultation on the face of the negro vanished as though flicked away ; a beam thrown from a mirror. A look almost of vexation replaced it.

“ My patron will not have been idle, nor my agent. It is to them that I am to look for the active preparations of the campaign.”

“ But you can’t leave it all to other people ! ” cried Giles. “ Gad, how I envy you ! Think of what is ahead in the way of organization and equipping and collecting your staff and your cabinet and all the rest of it ; then there are the foreign relations to consider, and the projection of matters of policy and diplomacy and municipal and civil affairs ! Jove, how I wish that I could have a hand in it, Aristide ! ” He looked wistfully at the Haytian. “ Couldn’t you—eh—couldn’t you take me on in some way ? ”

Dessalines’ face lighted suddenly, then as quickly grew somber.

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"I would give anything if I could, Giles, but it can't be done. One of the conditions of my patron is that there shall be no offices held by white men in the new dynasty. It must be purely a negro empire; my agent, Rosenthal, does not appear in any active way; he is simply a paid servant. It would hurt the Cause with the people if there was a white man in office." His voice grew dejected.

"I see that it would," admitted Giles. "It would look as if you could not handle the thing alone—had to call in outside help . . . what?"

Dessalines relapsed into his first apathy; Giles's words had presented with renewed force the perplexities of his ambitious undertaking. He brooded, striving painfully to select for consideration the first great problem, and scarce realizing that to do this he must first possess a detailed knowledge of the present political position of his country. His education, reading, theory arose against him; he tried to apply it in the place of his common sense. Giles, mistaking his abstraction, arose.

"I will run along, old chap; you will want to do some solid thinking, I fancy."

Dessalines threw out a detaining arm. "Don't go. Giles . . . don't!" he implored. Giles, still mistaking his purpose, smiled.

"Really must, old chap. Got some things to attend to. Good luck! And, I say, my best congratulations you know and all that, . . ." he added bashfully.

Dessalines seized him by the hand. "Thank you, my friend."

After Giles had gone the negro relapsed into a brooding melancholy. He began to think aloud; to tabulate

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the various essential elements of his campaign. The sound of his voice encouraged him, gave him confidence; yet to obtain this fully he must have a listener. He raised his great voice.

"Holà! Jules! Jules!"

From the house there came an answering cry; thin, raucous, resembling the call of a peacock. *"Oui, monsieur, I come!"*

With his servant Dessalines naturally conversed in French. A moment later Jules entered the pagoda.

Jules, the valet of Dessalines, was most aptly described by his *petit nom* of "le corbeau." Crowlike, or, more properly, ravenlike, he was in appearance, voice, and habit. Dessalines had secured him in a peculiar way; the way in which one would naturally secure so wary a bird.

It was while he was occupying apartments in a hotel in Paris that Dessalines, whose instincts were as keenly accurate as those of a cat, became aware that some one was in the habit of spying upon him through a crack in his door. Wishing to catch and cuff the offender, whom he correctly judged to be one of the servants of the house, he laid a snare. Without appearing conscious of having noticed the espionage, he moved toward the door as though to hang up his coat; then, quick as a cat, he threw the door open, clutched through the aperture with one great hand and drew into his room a squirming, struggling creature, who in his terror was able only to squawk like a fowl.

"Aha, my fine fellow," cried Dessalines, throwing him across the room after he had closed and locked the door, "now that I have got you I will teach you a les-

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son!" Dessalines, though not cruel, was as merciless as an animal. He slipped a strap from his portmanteau, then looked curiously at his catch.

He saw a meager little individual of perhaps thirty years. At the moment the creature was standing where the Haytian had hurled him, his birdlike head cocked to one side, his black, beady eyes fixed upon his captor with a regard less frightened than fascinated. The scrutiny puzzled the Haytian; aroused his self-consciousness; put him ill at ease.

"Why do you stare at me in that way?" he demanded.

"Because I have never seen a gentleman of the magnificent proportions of monsieur, and it is to admire," replied the little fellow, in a curiously discordant voice.

Dessalines' susceptible, negro vanity was flattered, but he was suspicious.

"And I suppose that is the reason why you have been spying upon me," he observed.

"It is true, monsieur," replied the man candidly. "Monsieur possesses for me a fascination. It is not possible that monsieur desires a *valet de chambre*? I would serve him at a nominal wage, so attractive to me is the personality of monsieur!" He tilted his narrow face with its birdlike profile to the other side, and studied Dessalines with a curious mixture of admiration and impudence. The fact that he showed no sign of fear without doubt saved him a beating.

Dessalines' fancy was keenly tickled; a Parisian valet! The idea was very *chic*; it would increase his prestige at home and abroad; there was also something in the manner of the creature which stroked his vanity.

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"What do you call yourself?" he asked.

"Jules, monsieur. By many I am called 'le cor-beau.'"

Dessalines laughed explosively; the nickname stirred his broad negro humor.

"*Mon Dieu*, but they name you well!" He chuckled, giggled, bit his fingers, in his mirth. "Would you like to travel, Jules?"

"To the ends of the earth in the service of monsieur."

"Can you shave?" asked Dessalines, laughing again.

"I can do all that is required of a valet, monsieur."

"Very well; you may enter my service. I will give you your clothes and ninety francs the month."

"Monsieur is munificent!" squawked Jules; and thus he entered the service of the Haytian.

Dessalines soon discovered that the man had told him the truth. Apparently there was nothing in which Jules took the same satisfaction as in the society of his master. His constant exclamations of awe and admiration at the herculean proportions of Dessalines were a huge source of gratification to the latter, a massage to the vanity. He grew much attached to Jules; being of a generous nature, he gave him handsome presents for which the little Frenchman was grateful, but which he never seemed to solicit. He was, in fact, profusely attached to his master; they were complementary parts.

The characteristics of Dessalines which Jules strongly disapproved were his religion and his morality; he could not understand how a creature of the super-abundant vitality of his master could fear either God or

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Satan. Jules himself was cheerfully atheistic; cautious, but quite fearless.

"But monsieur is *triste*!" he would protest. "Ah, if monsieur could but see how the ladies he passes on the street regard him!"

"Hush, Jules, it is necessary to think of one's soul—to please *le bon Dieu*." And Jules would shrug into silence.

It had not taken Dessalines long to discover that his valet was marvelously astute. He had at length confided in him his plans, his ambitions. Jules had become valet, counselor, and friend.

Now as he joined his master his crowlike face was expressionless as ever, but the beady eyes glinted with excitement. He had guessed at what the cablegram contained; one glance at the face of his master confirmed this surmise.

"Jules," said Dessalines in a hollow voice, "the moment has arrived."

Jules hopped forward; in the service of Dessalines he wore a black cutaway coat which enhanced the aptness of his nickname. His small black eyes shone.

"Oh, monsieur le Comte is to be congratulated, why then is monsieur *triste*?"

Dessalines groaned. He made no pretenses to Jules.

"It is the doubt . . . the uncertainty . . . the fear that I may be tried and found wanting. O Jules, the good God has laid a heavy burden upon his servant!" Dessalines covered his face with both huge hands. His great chest swelled beneath the deep-drawn breaths.

Jules looked at him, his head on one side and the pupils of the beady eyes dilated. Dessalines under emo-

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tion of any sort never failed to stir the pulses of his valet. Small, meager, ill formed as was Jules, with narrow, sunken chest, and spindling limbs, there was no object under heaven that so moved him as physical redundancy, whether it were in man or woman or beast; he would spend his last cent to witness an athletic contest, preferably, something brutal; and it was on this account that he adored England. The strain and heave of great living bodies excited him; the sight of Dessalines upon his mammoth stallion was in itself a debauch; it was purely artistic, this trait, but then Jules was an artist in more ways than one. Now, as he watched his master, he was strangely moved, for despite his expressionless features Jules was a creature of powerful emotions; he was moved less by his distress than by the heave of the great chest with every indrawn breath, the crushing force with which the black face was buried in the enormous hands, the slack droop to the big shoulders.

“Ah, but that is only the modesty of monsieur!” he answered. “It is also that Monsieur le Comte is somewhat unnerved from too deep study—and the lack of gayety. For several days monsieur has been depressed. I, Jules, have observed it.” Dessalines’ hands slipped slowly downward; a wrinkle or two smoothed on the broad forehead. Jules continued: “One cannot judge of oneself; who is so able as I to estimate the abilities of Monsieur le Comte? I who see him daily in all of his moods, in all of his occupations!” A ray of light crept into the black face. “And is there anyone, I should like to know, more fitted to rule than Monsieur le Comte? is there any other man possessed of such power of mind and body?” Dessalines’ arms fell slowly to his sides

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where they hung, elbows bent from the tonic contraction of the heavy biceps. "Who," Jules continued, "has such a magnificent presence for the council chamber; such wisdom for the laws of statecraft?" Dessalines' eyes brightened. "Such honesty, such goodness, to endear him to his people!" The negro face assumed an expression of ineffable good nature. "Such a figure to follow into the combat!" Dessalines drew himself to his full height, the flat nostrils began to dilate. "Or," continued the valet, "such a voice with which to hurl forth his battle cry and lead his *victorious troops*!"

"*Holà!*" cried Dessalines. His bulging eyes were bright; the whole expression was exultant. He turned to his valet. "You give me courage, my good Jules! What should I do without you, *camarade*? You show me things in their real light!" He threw his great arms above his head, fists clenched; drew the sweet evening air deeply into his spacious lungs. "Courage, Dessalines! Courage, *mon ami*! God willing, you shall yet lead your troops to glorious victory!" The tears gushed from his eyes; he threw both hands upward with a gesture of adoration.

"Leave me, Jules. I wish to pray."

PART II
HAYTI

CHAPTER XIII

MADAM FOUCHÈRE

THREE days later Dessalines sailed by the French line for New York. As he went aboard the steamer, followed by Jules, a rich voice accosted him in French and the conversation proceeded in that tongue.

"*Holdà, mon camarade! Aristide, mon brave!* Oh, but I am charmed!" Dessalines turned quickly.

"*Ah, mon cher docteur,* it is really you! To my arms, comrade."

A tall man, tall as Dessalines, equally black but less massive in build, of a magnificent figure, rushed quickly toward him, clasped him in his arms, and kissed him on the lips.

"And we are to be companions on the voyage, my dear Fouchère?" cried Dessalines.

"Yes, my dear fellow; madam and I are returning early on account of the political situation." He glanced quickly at Dessalines. "You have heard the news?"

"Of the abdication? Yes, I received a cablegram, but that is all that I know; merely that the President has abdicated. Have you any further news?"

"But little; I learned further that President Sam has left the island, sailing on the steamship *Olinde Rodriguez* of the *Campagnie Générale Transatlantique*. The cable reached me but two days ago; hence, the im-

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mediate return of madam and myself. I feel that there will be much confusion in Hayti, and it is impossible to be at ease if one holds real estate. You know I own shops in Port au Prince, in Gonaïves; also, coffee plantations near Aux Cayes and cacao at Petit Goâves. It is most difficult to predict what will be the fate of our poor country." He glanced narrowly at Dessalines.

Dessalines, although emotional, was not without his full share of animal cunning. At sight of Dr. Fouchère, whom he knew for a clever man and suspected of being an *intriguer* in Haytian affairs, his first instinct had been that of caution. His reason told him that Fouchère would guess the cause of his return in part, consequently he had promptly admitted his knowledge of the abdication.

"You are wise," said Dessalines. "I, too, have certain business interests to protect, hence my return. But tell me, my dear Tancrède, have you any knowledge of the political situation? Myself, I have been so deep in my law studies that I have quite lost sight of Haytian affairs."

Again Fouchère glanced at him swiftly, but with more confidence. He underrated the cunning of Dessalines.

"I know but little myself," said Fouchère. "In Paris I met Anthénor Firmin, *ministre plénipotentiaire*; he is a man of great intelligence, and it is my impression that Simon Sam sent him to Paris because he felt him to be a menace to the government. I think that he is ambitious and will enter the lists. Then there is S. M. Pierre, a very honest man and very sensible, if not particularly brilliant. He is from the south, from Anse-

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à-Veau. I think that he may be a candidate and he will have the support of the people; he has no white blood."

Fouchère, unlike Dessalines, was a *marabout*, pure negro but of a royal strain of African blood; a strain from which chiefs were chosen. *Marabouts* are famed for their physical beauty and preservation into advanced age. He continued, talking rapidly in beautiful Parisian French. "Then there is Calisthène Fouchard, a mulatto but of good disposition, liberal toward progress and the white races; he is from Jeremie."

Fouchère rattled on volubly, and Dessalines, leaning on the rail, listened with interest if not entirely with belief. Personally he was fond of Fouchère; they had been acquainted from boyhood. Like Dessalines, Fouchère was a native Haytian of pure African blood, and like Dessalines he was the offspring, by *placage*, of a former president of Hayti. As a boy he had been sent from Hayti, and he and Dessalines had been companions in Paris, where Fouchère was at this time well known and received by many good Parisian families. Fouchère was a man of striking physical beauty—straight, tall, broad of shoulder, small of waist, with fine, regular features and a skin like black satin. He was a Hermes carved in coal. His hair was almost straight. He was lacking in Dessalines' gorillalike strength, and also lacking in his clean and honest principles, but he was a man of higher polish and more active imagination.

Dessalines listened with pleasure to Fouchère's rapid flow of excellent French; interested, regardless of the curious stares of their white fellow passengers.

"You were in Hayti last October, were you not, Tan-crède?" he asked presently.

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"Yes; it is necessary for me to return twice in the year, or I should never leave our dear Paris. Between ourselves, Aristide, Hayti is a frightful country; the people are animals."

"It is not their fault. What do you think will be the outcome now that Sam has abdicated?"

"It is impossible to say; there are the men whom I have mentioned, all ambitious; there is also Nord Alexis at Cape Haitien, a subtle man; and then there is that white devil, Admiral Killik, now in command of the *Crête-à-Pierrot*. It is impossible to say, there are so many cats in the bag. But come, dear friend, do not let us vex ourselves about these things which we cannot help; let us go to the smoking room and have a cigarette and a cognac."

"And how is the health of madam?" asked Dessalines, as he followed his friend. "You know that I have never had the honor of meeting her."

"Ah, that is true! Madam will be delighted. At present she is resting, being quite worn out by the gayeties of our last week in Paris. Like myself I think that she will welcome the quiet of Hayti."

"Will you stop over in New York?" inquired Dessalines.

"No. It is necessary for me to return as quickly as possible, and between ourselves, comrade, I abominate New York . . . nor do they love us there! If we are on time we can the following day take the *Prinz Wilhelm Fourth* for Hayti. Will you not come with us?"

Dessalines pondered. "No; I regret that I must wait over one steamer. I have affairs in New York."

Again Fouchère glanced at him quickly. "It is a

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detestable place, New York, the United States! Bah! These Americans . . . !” He pushed the electric bell. “I loathe that country and its people; they are mad . . . they all have hysterics! They spent millions of dollars and thousands of lives to liberate their slaves and then sit down and wonder what they are to do with them next! The South fears her former slaves; the North spends money to educate them. They talk of their possibilities, their immortal souls, their rights! *Diable!* The drollery of talking of the possibilities, the souls, the rights of ten millions of mongrel, half-breed peasants! They take great trouble over this question in the United States of America. They debate it, have conferences over it, write about it, and my dear Aristide, there are many men in the United States to-day who pose as expounders of the policy to be pursued with their negro population whose only knowledge of the negro is of the American peasant, in most cases half white; who have actually never seen our race in any other country or under any other conditions! And while they are theorizing and preaching and declaiming, and varying this with occasional burning of some maniac, there is a constant breeding of mulattoes and thinning of blacks! It is to laugh—ha, ha, ha!”

Dessalines did not laugh; wit could not stir his crude sense of humor. It must be a clownish thing, less subtle than wit, which stirred his risibilities. The humor of Fouchère was that of a Frenchman, whereas Dessalines’ was purely negroid. If the waiter, who at that moment responded to the bell, had thrust his head through the door and made a grimace Dessalines would have laughed.

“And what have you been doing to amuse yourself?”

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continued Dr. Fouchère. "How you can enjoy England is more than I can understand. *Garçon!* What will you have, Aristide, cognac? *Si! Garçon,* cognac and absinth *frappé* . . . and some Turkish cigarettes."

"I went to England to study," said Dessalines, "and I have been working."

Fouchère shrugged. "It sounds most fatiguing. But do you not miss the gayeties, the life, the ladies?"

Dessalines frowned. "My dear Tancrède I was never a gay fellow like yourself; but since I have been in England I have been led to the Light." Expressions which would have been cant to an Englishman were deeply impressive to the primitive nature of Dessalines. "Personally I prefer the English *régime*; decency, morality, religion, are the strongest buttresses of state. Before all else I am a Haytian, and I have seen too fully how the curse of our country has always been the pursuit of pleasure on the part of those in positions to indulge themselves." His voice gained weight as he began to forget himself in his words. "Hayti is a youthful republic . . . and an *opéra bouffe*. It is my ambition—" he glanced furtively at Fouchère who was watching him intently, "to make . . . to set a different example," he ended sulkily.

Fouchère gave him a quick look and began to talk of other things. Dessalines listened, interested, diverted, presently amused. In answer to the inquiries of his friend he narrated his own doings of the past few weeks, dilating with negro vanity upon his intimacy with the Maltbys.

"Ah, there was a charming fellow there, an acquaintance of yours, my dear Tancrède—a naturalist."

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"It was not my friend Dr. Leyden!" cried Fouchère.

"But, yes; a delightful fellow."

"I knew him well!" cried Fouchère. "He is as you say a delightful fellow; I once had the pleasure of entertaining him at my villa at La Coupe." For some time they talked of Leyden and then Fouchère arose.

"It is time to dress for dinner," said he. "Madam will probably not appear this evening, but I will see you at dinner, my dear Aristide," and with a bow to his friend he left the smoking room.

Dessalines went below to find himself duly installed in his stateroom by Jules. As it was growing late he dressed for dinner. Madam Fouchère did not appear and he spent the evening with his friend. The pair excited much interest among their fellow passengers.

When he awoke the following morning the sea was smooth as a lake. He rang for Jules who appeared with coffee and rolls.

"Good morning, Jules," said Dessalines lazily. He had rested ill, for the size of the bunk was ridiculously inadequate to contain his enormous frame.

"*Merci*, Monsieur le Comte," replied Jules, with a birdlike bob of the head. "I hope that you have rested well, but fear that this absurd bed has been too cramped for the comfort of one of the magnificent proportions of Monsieur le Comte."

"*Peste!*" growled Dessalines, "one might as well try to sleep in a hat box. What is the weather, Jules?"

"Delightful . . . and the sea like the floor of a dance hall."

"And the temperature?"

"It is mild as a day in the spring."

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"Very well!" Dessalines threw out one great arm and yawned. Jules gazed fascinated at the gaping jaws set with their huge, strong, gleaming teeth. Jules had been three years in the service of the Haytian and had not yet reached the limit of his awed admiration for his master.

"You will lay out the light-gray Oxford, Jules, and one of the heliotrope negligee shirts. I will also wear the steamer shoes and the gray gaiters. But first shave me, Jules."

Dessalines was scrupulously tidy; also, he loved stylish clothes. His toilet completed he strolled on deck where he found Dr. Fouchère directing a steward who was arranging a steamer chair.

"Oh, good morning, comrade!" cried Fouchère. Then to the steward: "*Diable!* would you have the face of madam in the sun? Now fetch another pillow. *Là*, you have drawn the rug too low! The shoulders of madam will be exposed to the draught——"

"I trust that Madam Fouchère has quite recovered from her indisposition," said Dessalines.

"Thank you, dear Aristide, she is feeling almost herself again. I go now to bring her up. That will do," he said to the steward, and excusing himself to his friend, went below.

Dessalines waited in some curiosity. He had heard tales of the beauty of Madam Fouchère. He recollected that his friend had married in Paris several years previously; that his wife was of Haytian parentage, but born and educated in France; also, it seemed to him that he had heard it said that she was almost white.

Pleased at this prospective diversion for the voyage

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he waited for several minutes, but Fouchère did not come. Dessalines stepped into the smoking room to permit himself the gratification of another view of his costume which he was wearing that day for the first time and the taste of which had thrown Jules into ecstasies. As usual, such people as were near by had not eyes enough to sufficiently regard him, but to this scrutiny Dessalines was accustomed; would, in fact, have missed it had it been lacking.

The tailor who had cut the clothes had realized his opportunity; the coat, of fine, light-gray Oxford, hung without fold or wrinkle, brought out the sweeping curves of chest and back, minimized the abnormal size of the shoulders, called attention to the swelling contour of the torso, and accentuated the smallness of waist. The trousers cunningly disguised the slight outward arch of the legs and relative smallness of the calves; the light gaiters gave form and finish to the large expanse of shoe leather; a neat golf cap of the same material as the suit rested becomingly upon his massive head. His necktie was of a dark shade of green, in perfect harmony with the tint of his silk negligee shirt. Altogether he was the acme of taste, striking, remarkable, anomalous, yet in accord.

He surveyed his reflection for a minute of most profound satisfaction, a satisfaction which contained an almost exuberant delight at the perfection of his costume. People watching him did not smile; they wondered. Several French women whom he passed on the deck were unable to take their eyes from him as he passed them on his way to the chair prepared for Madam Fouchère. As he drew near he saw that the chair was

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occupied by a white woman of striking beauty, evidently a *Parisienne*, if one were to judge by the type, the costume, the *chic*. Dessalines, under the impression that an error had been made, drew near and bowed politely. As he did so the woman raised her eyes and he caught in their multicolored depths a quick expression as of recognition, of excitement; scarcely a flash, but a sudden deepening of tint, possibly a dilatation of the large pupils.

"Pardon," said Dessalines courteously, "but perhaps madam is not aware that this is the chair of Madam Fouchère." He paused, embarrassed, and stirred at something in the woman's face. As he looked her intense expression was swept magically away, the baffling eyes lost their fierceness, the delicate nostrils resumed their normal caliber, the parted lips rippled into a smile.

"You are a faithful guardian, Comte Dessalines, for of course you can be no one else!"

A quick intelligence shone in Dessalines' wide features.

"And you are Madam Fouchère!" he cried. "Imbecile that I am!"

"But how were you to know?"

"Because the fame of madam's charm has pervaded England as well as France and Hayti."

Again her weirdly tinted eyes grew lurid with the deep lights which caused Dessalines' great heart to strike its walls a mighty blow. He caught his breath and his blue-black eyes devoured the woman in front of him. She was reclining on the deck chair; the steamer rug enveloped her from head to foot, but failed to conceal

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the lithe luxuriance of her figure. Her face, oval, white as alabaster, yet with a fine, firm texture of skin which betokened health, was almost perfect in feature, but lavish in a fullness of expression almost startling. The lips, curved slightly upward at the corners, were of the color of red-hot iron; the nose, Grecian, alluringly *retroussé*, with delicate Eurasian nostrils aquiver at each passing emotion—but the eyes, of indescribable color, perhaps because they contained all shades, with pupils which swelled and shrank and oscillated like those of a bird which flies through the banded glare of a black, tropic forest! Her hair was fine as smoke, of the color of the smoke which eddies from a crucible of molten copper, and, in its changeless hue in even light, Dessalines saw with initiate eye the shadows of the Dark Continent.

None but a negro could have recognized the stray corpuscles of negro blood; the popular fallacies of finger nails, faded tints of palm, lividity of mucous membranes all defied detection; only the blood cry of the race could have set in vibration the chords responding to the call of kind.

“Monsieur flatters!” Madam Fouchère’s long lashes swept down to hide her chameleon eyes. Dessalines observed that they were darker than her hair and of a rich shade, deeper in tone than absolute black. Her skin was of the pallor of white objects just before a storm.

“Pardon, but that is impossible. In Paris one speaks of the Doctor and Madam Fouchère as Night and Morning; can one then flatter the dawn?”

Again the velvety curtains swept upward for an instant, the indescribable eyes sent him such a gleam as might flare from a furnace when the door was opened,

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and as swiftly closed, and again at the regard Dessalines felt the surging of powerful emotions.

He was in his element now—posing, perfectly clad, in the brilliant sunshine; idling, basking, admired; for this emotion, with others, he had read in the swift glances of the *griffonne*. Paying compliments was an art in which he was an adept, as in all arts requiring words rather than thought, and manner in the place of mental force. Then he was stared at; they were both stared at; and this was always stimulating to Dessalines. His personality was pitched to the key of the crowd. He could, with ease, harangue an assemblage; he found it difficult to converse with Leyden!

“Madam is no doubt vexed at being obliged to return so soon to Hayti—to leave Paris?” he ventured. She leaned back, rested her head in its cloud of smoky hair and glanced at him from under the long lashes, the eyes mere slits looking along the plane of her cheeks. Madam saved the full blaze of her wonderful eyes for climaxes. She clasped her small, perfectly shaped hands, the fingers of which were loaded with rings which might have aroused the covetousness of a king.

“Ah, does monsieur say ‘vexed’? I—to return to Hayti?” She laughed a low, purring, passionate laugh. “Paris and—*Hayti!* Paris! Poor, decrepit Paris, with its population of emasculates; weak-kneed, senile, decadent Paris—and—*Hayti!*” The lashes swirled upward; the great, changeful eyes gleamed with the glare of an ocelot’s. “Hayti! Strong, savage, virile Hayti, with its huge-muscled men, its blazing sunlight, . . .” her voice sank, “and its *black shadows!*”—the lashes swept downward.

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"Then you love Hayti?" asked Dessalines, leaning toward her, powerfully moved.

"Ah, yes; I love Hayti! It is Fouchère who is fond of Paris—but then Fouchère has *me!*" She laughed, and he felt her eyes playing over him from the dark crevice between the lashes. "Monsieur resides in England. Why is that? Are the people not fatiguing? Do you find it amusing?"

"I have been studying," answered Dessalines slowly. "I did not go to be amused; my amusements are to come later." His black features grew thoughtful. Dessalines was unable to hide an emotion, although he could conceal a purpose.

"And has monsieur done nothing but study? Has he found no time for gayety?" asked Madam Fouchère curiously.

"That is all," replied Dessalines, interpreting the remark as he knew it was intended. "I have been reading international law and political economy; also, certain works of Le Bon."

"But no diversion?" persisted madam.

"None, except to dine or spend a few hours of the day with my friends the Maltbys. Giles, the only son of Sir Henry Maltby, was my college mate at Oxford. It was there that I made the acquaintance of a mutual friend, Doctor Leyden."

Madam Fouchère sat suddenly upright; her sensitive face seemed to palpitate.

"*Leyden!* Then you have met Leyden?"

Dessalines bowed assent. The lips of Madam Fouchère quivered.

"He is now in England?"

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“Yes; it is possible that he may return to the Orinoco this autumn, in which case he said that he might stop at Hayti *en route*. He is a charming fellow, is he not? He made me almost die of laughter.”

“He is a cold-blooded devil!” Madam Fouchère’s voice was the snarl of a jaguar. “He is beautiful as Apollo, is he not?” she added, in an altered tone. “But he has no—no—ah, here comes Fouchère with my bouillon! He also is a handsome fellow, is he not? See how the women all look at him! It is always so; I assure you I would be quite jealous if it were not that—that the men look at *me*.”

CHAPTER XIV

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BUT do not delay in New York, Dessalines," pleaded Madam Fouchère, "continue with us to Port au Prince. New York is abominable unless one is bleached white like myself."

They were sitting together in one of the alcoves of the main *salon*; it was late in the afternoon; Fouchère was playing cards with some Parisians and Dessalines had asked Madam Fouchère to have champagne and fruit.

"It is imperative, my friend," answered Dessalines. "There are affairs which it is impossible to neglect."

"There is nothing else?" she asked, watching him narrowly, as she toyed with the stem of the glass.

"*Hélas!*" said Dessalines reproachfully, "you will not believe me when I tell you that I have no mind for gayety. Our country is in a grave crisis, my friend, and it is necessary to be patriotic."

"Or to have ambitions," she answered swiftly. She raised her glass and regarded him mockingly. "*Santé*, Dessalines, second emperor of Hayti!" From the shadowy corner where she sat her pale face gleamed against the rich upholstery and her eyes, dark, lurid, mocked him challengingly.

Dessalines glanced quickly about and then unconsciously his massive head was raised, the deep chest ex-

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panded, the black face grew fierce. It was but a transient emotion which, like all of his emotions, could not pass unheralded, but Madam Fouchère, watching him from her dark recess, lost none of it. Her mockery vanished.

"But why not?" she cried in a low voice, and leaned swiftly toward him. "You have the brain and the spirit and the knowledge and the—money. Fouchère controls a large district in Gonaïves and he is your friend." She leaned toward him still farther. "And *I* am your friend," she added softly, dropping her hand lightly upon his as it rested on the rim of the table. Her eyes glowed at his like two coals upon which one breathes gently.

Dessalines' great muscles tightened; the rim of white about the eyeballs widened; she saw the wide nostrils dilate. His hand, turning, clasped hers until she could have screamed, and he half-raised it to his lips, then slowly lowered it. Her eyes, lurid, questioned him.

"As you say," said Dessalines slowly, thickly, speaking under pressure, "Fouchère is *my friend*."

Madam Fouchère sank back, eying him curiously. She was a skilled player on the passions of men, both black and white; also, she possessed imagination. Pique and perplexity were tugging different ways. She knew nothing of the English at home; she knew well that she pleased this great Kongo, stirred him to his depths; she had guessed his ambitions, no difficult matter with Dessalines whose cells were single-unit ones and no match for the iridescent mind flashes of the subtle *griffonne*. She knew of his ambitions, his determination to govern Hayti; it had not taxed her powers of finesse to draw

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from him his great, childlike project for the alliance of the races wherein Hayti was to figure as the thin edge of the wedge which should cleave old oppositions; she knew of his determination to place beside him a woman of white and undiluted blood, a woman of position in the great world upon the other side of that thin impalpable barrier which she felt must separate the fair world from those who like herself dwelt in the shadow.

Madam Fouchère waited for the present emotion to pass. She stroked the African vanity with a caressing touch. She was puzzled to find in him such power of restraint; she could not realize the imbibing of principles from his Anglo-Saxon associates, nor did she give its proper value to the simple African honesty transmitted straight from early days, and often to be found in the negro whose influence has been other than Latin.

"But Fouchère is less your friend than I, dear Des-salines; he likes you, it is true, but can you not see that he has his jealousies? He is unwilling to admit of an intelligence equal to his own, which, to tell the truth, is very great; myself, being French as well as Haytian, I am able to recognize native genius where it occurs." She fastened her eyes upon his face. "If you will so far honor me as to accept my offer of friendship, dear friend, you will never have cause to regret it." Again she laid her hand upon his. But Dessalines, like many simple natures, was stubborn.

"Madam honors me more than I deserve," he replied in his deep voice. Madam Fouchère slowly withdrew her hand, while a metallic gleam crept into her half-lidded eyes. Experienced as she was, it was maddening to find herself baffled by this great animal whose

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physical brutality held so much of her contempt and desire.

"It is easy to see that you are just from England, monsieur," she answered. "You are still in an atmosphere of fog and cold. When you have been a week in Hayti you will be different." Her marvelous eyes caressed his own. "I will ask you to remember, dear friend, that there is one in Hayti to whom you may always come in perplexity and the advice of whom you need not despise."

Dessalines bowed his head, raised her graceful hand slowly to his lips, but the action was passionless.

When the steamer arrived in New York Dessalines bade the Fouchères *au revoir*, first having promised the doctor to avail himself of his hospitality promptly upon his arrival in Hayti. As he left the gang plank, a tall, dark man stepped from the crowd of those waiting to greet arriving friends, and confronted Dessalines.

"My dear Comte!" he exclaimed in French, holding out a powerful, sinewy hand.

"Oh, oh! Rosenthal, *camarade!*" cried Dessalines eagerly. They embraced in the quaint French manner still to be seen in Hayti, kissing each other upon the cheeks. Rosenthal disengaged himself and held Dessalines at arm's length.

"You are as handsome as ever, my dear fellow!" he cried. They laughed. "You have had a good passage?"

"Delightful! I had the good fortune to fall in with the Fouchères who are returning."

"Ah!" The Jew's exclamation was sharp, incisive.

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"You know them, of course?" asked Dessalines.

"Oh, yes! Madam is beautiful, is she not?"

Rosenthal laughed to wipe away the impression of his first, sharp interrogation. As he laughed, his heavy, black mustache seemed to part in the middle and roll up and away from his strong, yellow teeth. He was a Bohemian Jew, a Czechian; a Jew of a fairly frequent but little-known type; a Jew to upset the popular Gentile opinions of his race. All traveled men have met him.

The world is familiar with the usual traits ascribed in excess to the Israelite, but not with this other Jew of whom there are many—thousands. He is the bold Jewish adventurer: an individual of iron physique; fierce courage when his safety or that of his goods is menaced; accomplished, a man of the world, generous with friends, lacking in pride but not humble; keen as a Chinaman with trade rivals; sensuous, alive to humor; capable of odd freaks of utterly disinterested kindness. A bold gambler, he is perhaps the only relic of the early adventurous Jewish traders who established the commerce, the credit of the world of finance; who ventured from the Levant, risking their lives and fortunes in frail vessels; rapacious, conscienceless with a trade victim; liberal with mistresses who were many; a rather admirable man, yet repellent to the Gentile by virtue of aggression. One who, in a company of plebeians, demands the ear of the one aristocrat; in a company of aristocrats, demands the ear of the one nobleman; in a company of nobles, demands the royal attention; who would buttonhole a divinity were this thing possible; or Satan himself in preference to any of his satellites.

Isidore Rosenthal was perhaps forty years of age;

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in style he was a muscular Mephistopheles. He was tall, big-boned, long-muscled, strongly awkward, yet symmetrical in figure; his hands were beautiful. His face was eager, mobile, with a mobility controlled less by emotion than the mind; no one expression was long naked; another overlapped it in the twinkling of an eye and sometimes so swiftly that the cruel, sensual mouth would be smiling while the eye still gleamed savage anger from beneath the black, bushy eyebrows.

Extremes met in Dessalines and Rosenthal: the first a savage of the most recent, the second a savage of the oldest civilization.

"You have arrived on the brim of the opportunity, my dear Comte; it would have been of no avail for you to have come sooner because my preparations are but just completed." Rosenthal's voice was harsh, discordant, raucous, but strong and full.

"And our vessel!" exclaimed Dessalines, "and the arms and ammunition and supplies?"

"Take care, take care," interrupted Rosenthal in a low, hoarse voice. "Pardon, dear Comte, but it is necessary to observe caution. As soon as we are clear of these accursed customs we will get into a cab and go to the hotel where I have engaged rooms for you; it is a quiet place where everyone minds his own business, and at this crisis it is better that you should sacrifice the admiration which accompanies you for the sake of discretion."

Dessalines acquiesced, although inwardly disappointed. He had been told by fellow passengers that New York had become too cosmopolitan to permit longer of race prejudice, and that he would be respect-

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fully treated at any of the best hotels. Dessalines possessed an intense dislike for accommodations which were modest and retiring, even although first class; nevertheless, he submitted gracefully to the superior judgment of his agent.

When finally clear of the customs, Rosenthal called a cab, leaving Jules in charge of the luggage. As soon as the door of the vehicle had slammed Dessalines turned eagerly to Rosenthal.

"And now, my dear fellow, the news; I am bursting with curiosity. Tell me of your plans, your preparations; but first of all the situation in Hayti."

"It is necessary that I begin with the incidents connected with the abdication of the President. As you may guess, this movement on his part, although premeditated by him, was brought about sooner than he had wished or anticipated by a discussion which arose as to whether he was entitled to the extra year of office gained by the death of Hippolyte. This right was denied by the adverse party, so the President, foreseeing a revolution, collected, with my assistance, all of the money that he could lay his hands on and sailed by the steamship *Olinde Rodriguez* of the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique."

"How much money was he able to secure?" asked Dessalines quickly.

"I do not know; but he has intrusted to me half a million of dollars to be spent for your cause, with the promise of more if you need it. For such disbursements as I have made already I will account to you later. But to resume; immediately before his abdication he convened the Chamber to elect a new President. The most

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promising candidate was Cincinnatus Le Conte, a man from the north, Cape Haitien. As soon as his election seemed assured, members of the adverse party began firing from the gallery and in the midst of the uproar President Sam sprang to his feet and cried: 'Gentlemen, I pray of you not to delay with your voting as we have need of haste!' The shooting became more general, and the different members of the Senate began to fly in all directions. At this the old rascal cried out: 'Gentlemen, let us remember our duty to our country!' Then, as a bullet struck the leg of his chair, he howled 'and to ourselves!' With this he fled from the Chamber with the Cabinet after him, like so many kittens behind the old cat. This was the way the revolution commenced. He fled on May 14th, assisted by the consuls of the different Powers."

Dessalines laughed at the Jew's account, but his face was troubled with the effort of concentrated thought.

"There is now much confusion?" he asked.

Rosenthal threw out both hands. "It is laughable! They are coming from all sides, like kites to a dead donkey. This red-haired Killik who is in command of the *Crête-à-Pierrot* has run the red flag to his truck and declared himself a pirate."

"Admiral Killik!" exclaimed Dessalines.

"Yes. The fellow who stole the white girl and carried her off to his villa at La Coupe. The Chamber meanwhile has elected Boistrund Canal as President of the Provisional Government and Nord Alexis as Minister of War."

"A dangerous man," commented Dessalines.

"Yes, and clever. Personally I consider him the

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only one whom we have to fear. But so much for the situation; doubtless you will now be interested to learn how I have been occupying myself in the work of preparation. When we get to your hotel we will go over the matter in detail and you may audit my accounts with the receipts and other papers." Rosenthal paused and Dessalines settled himself back against the cushions with an involuntary sigh of disagreeable anticipation. Rosenthal, experienced, quick-witted man of the world that he was, read the emotions passing in the mind of his employer. He laughed indulgently.

"Ah, my dear Comte," said he, "it is indeed a pity to inflict upon you these cares the moment of your landing from a voyage; but courage, my dear Comte, it will not take long and everything is in good order. Your following in Hayti has been recruited from different districts by the agents of the ex-President; it remains only for us to arm and transport them to the scene of action. As to my part of the programme, I have purchased for you, through the agency of the firm of Mallock and Fenn, an admirable steamer of twenty-two hundred tons; the *Waccamaw*, a good vessel and in every way suited to our purpose. I got her at a bargain as you will see; I obtained a fifteen-per-cent discount for a cash payment and have made them replace the old boiler tubes with new; she will be ready for sea in three days. I have also purchased two field pieces, six six-pounders—these last rapid-fire guns—and arms and equipments for a thousand men. The uniforms are magnificent." He glanced slyly at Dessalines. "They are variegated for the different corps and will make a most brilliant display." Rosenthal found it unnecessary to state that

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among other "slops" he had bought the cast-off uniforms of the full choruses of three large burlesque theatrical troupes. Rosenthal was a competent man. He continued, talking rapidly: "It will be a thrilling spectacle, my dear Comte, a review of your troops in these uniforms which I have purchased at such a bargain that I am ashamed to tell you what I paid."

Dessalines' eyes brightened; the expression of apathy produced by the mention of the accounts to be audited was gradually effaced.

"You delight me, my dear fellow. I consider it very important, this matter of uniforms. A brave showing is half the battle; I feared that you might be tempted to purchase the dull, shoddy uniforms used by the army of this country."

"Not a bit of it. For your personal staff I have purchased twenty uniforms unsurpassed for style and elegance." He consulted his notebook. "Dolmans of hunter's green trimmed with gold lace; epaulets extra size. NOTE.—Dolmans to be worn with one or both sleeves loose, as a *manteau militaire*. Trousers of same material, with broad crimson stripes; gaiters white with buttons of gold."

Dessalines struggled hard to conceal his gratification. "The description is attractive," he observed. "They should be in excellent taste."

"I will not fatigue you now, my dear Comte, with other details regarding uniforms; you shall see for yourself. I think that they will meet with your approval. As regards provisions, munitions, and such details, the data is all awaiting us in my trunk at your hotel."

Again the sable face clouded.

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“It is necessary for us to apply ourselves diligently to these matters for a time,” continued Rosenthal, and there was a tinge of austerity in the rough voice, “that in a few short weeks you may be able to enter the city of Port au Prince at the head of your victorious troops and take your proud place with the sovereigns of the world.”

“*Victoire!*” burst involuntarily from the deep chest of Dessalines.

CHAPTER XV

AN OVATION

AFTER being left by his agent, Dessalines gave himself up to a debauch of imaginings, for like many Africans he possessed to a very great degree the capacity for highly colored flights of fancy. It is this quality which, perhaps more than any other, raises the negro to the plane above many other savage races who lack this quality of living in other worlds than the material; it is the quality which endears the old slave to the children of his master who adore the descriptions of the quaint tenants of his mind, and it is this also which gives him his shivering superstitions and arouses him to a point of fanatical frenzy. Dessalines possessed this abnormally. Though lacking in actual imagination he was rich in fantasy, and it was to flights of this that he surrendered himself. He saw himself as emperor—king of Hayti. His state; his power; his magnificence. Never did there enter his dreams the perplexities of foreign relations and diplomacy; the discouraging details in the regeneration of an impoverished country. Then he saw Hayti rich, prosperous, her people improved, educated, enlightened, but he did not consider in his dreams the steps by which these things must be accomplished. He was honest. He had no thought of enriching himself at the cost of the country; also, he was brave and ready to lead his forces where he wished

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to go, but his dreams did not turn to strife; rather they dwelt on the fruits of his efforts: chiefly popular acclaim—and with these fancies came a desire of such force as to be an actual need; a desire to impart these glowing prospects to another, to a person of vigorous mentality and sympathetic temperament. He yearned for approbation, encouragement, confidence, and with the consciousness of these needs his mind turned at once to Virginia.

He had learned before he left England that Virginia was visiting friends at a place with an English name, not far from Boston. Manchester—yes; that was it. He had a faint idea of the distance of Boston from New York, but on inquiring at his hotel found that it was five hours by a fast train. He did not object to the trip as he wished to see the country.

His agent had said that he did not need him; bade him amuse himself, and deplored the fact that his duties prevented his showing him any personal attention.

Rosenthal came the following morning and accompanied him to the depot. People whom they passed on the streets regarded Dessalines with interest and curiosity, but he encountered no sign of hostility, at which he was somewhat surprised, having heard so much of the anti-negro sentiment in the United States. Aboard the train it was likewise. In the Pullman his fellow passengers, well-bred people for the most, stared furiously, but none made any protest concerning his presence. Dessalines' well-groomed appearance, the cut and style of his costume, his man-servant with whom he talked in French, constantly and volubly, separated him from all preconceived American views of the negro. He did not seem a "darker," he was an Othello; even the

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negro porter was impressed and respectful, an unusual quality in the attitude of a negro menial toward a negro gentleman.

Arrived in Boston he went at once to the most fashionable hotel, where he was accommodated without question. Other guests may or may not have protested his presence; if so the matter was not brought to his notice. Jules spread the report that he was a Haytian nobleman of vast wealth who had been recently entertained by British sovereignty; one or two papers paragraphed him. His picture and a biography which touched the truth in some places appeared in a Sunday newspaper supplement.

On arriving, he had written immediately to Virginia, requesting the privilege of calling upon her. Jules had examined the time-table and discovered that his master could go out on a noon train, returning in the evening. He had arrived in Boston on a Friday, and, while waiting for a reply to his note, he visited Harvard University, where he presented certain Oxford credentials and was received with the utmost cordiality.

Dessalines could not have explained to himself his desire to see Virginia. Perhaps he was a trifle overawed at the magnitude of his plans and wished a *confidante*; some one to give him a word of encouragement, a word of belief. It was the need of a dog for his master's presence when in strange surroundings, the need of a primitive nature for the guidance of a higher mentality. He knew Virginia to be sympathetic; he had felt the influence of her highly developed mentality upon his elemental one just as he had felt the influence of his own superabundant materialism upon her more spiritual na-

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ture; he was drawn by the call of incompleteness; the need of a complementary entity.

On Sunday he received an answer to his letter. It was written in French and read:

DEAR COUNT DESSALINES:

I shall be very glad to receive you here to-morrow afternoon and will have you met at the depot. Mrs. Cromwell, my hostess, begs me to ask you to dine with us.

Most sincerely,

VIRGINIA WADE MOULTRIE.

Jules, who had fetched the letter, remained while his master read it. Dessalines meditated for a moment, then taking out his notebook scribbled upon a leaf:

Will be delighted to accept the invitation with which you have honored me.

DESSALINES.

He handed the paper to Jules. "Wire this at once."

"*Oui, monsieur.* Will Monsieur le Comte be interested to see what the newspapers are saying of him?"

Jules offered his master a Sunday paper. Dessalines took it eagerly. He was ravenous for any notoriety of a creditable character; once or twice when he had been caricatured he had wept with shame and his savage heart had been filled with a murderous ferocity. His hand trembled as he reached for the paper.

"The pictures do not flatter Monsieur le Comte," ventured Jules, "but they are respectfully intended. The reporters called when Monsieur le Comte was taking his siesta; I ventured to supply them with an account of his magnificence."

"In future I wish to be called," said Dessalines

shortly. He threw open the colored supplement and almost the first thing to catch his eye was a full page of drawings representing himself in various guises: one as a student at Oxford; another of himself in evening clothes, entertained by royalty; still another showed him being dressed by Jules, and the last represented him in a gorgeous setting of tropical foliage, clothed in white and reclining in a hammock where he was being served by a galaxy of dusky damsels.

The headlines were garish. "A West-Indian Cræsus!" they read; "Count Aristide Dessalines, of Hayti, now in Boston." With sublines, "A Graduate of Oxford University;" "Entertained by British Nobility;" "Has a French Valet;" "A Hercules in Jet," and similar phrases.

Dessalines read the account through twice, his eyes sparkling with gratification. The account was exaggerated, flamboyant, highly colored, but flattering to a point which would have aroused the disgust of any but a negro.

"Get me a dozen—three dozen—of these papers!" he said to Jules, "and if any more of the reporters call do not fail to arrange an interview. To-morrow I will sit for my photograph." His black face was beaming with pleasure; indeed, the account had the result of making him a celebrity, and he noticed an increased deference in the menials about the hotel.

The following morning his mail was profuse; there were letters from people of all kinds, requesting interviews: from clergymen, societies for the amelioration of the negro, from negro lecturers and public men, from women. Dessalines was overcome, amazed, half-drunk

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with what he accepted as fame. Many people called in the course of the forenoon; his reception room was filled with reporters. The proprietor of the hotel put another and larger suite at his disposal.

Dessalines was interviewed, harangued, sketched, photographed, and as the time for his departure approached he contemplated wiring to postpone his engagement. The Haytian was in his element; his deep sonorous voice rolled through the luxurious apartments; his sable face wore a bland expression of deliciously stroked vanity; his views in regard to the United States and its people underwent a change.

Toward noon he wearied of the ovation and leaving Jules to receive and answer questions, had a cab called and drove to the station. There he was recognized and promptly surrounded by a crowd, but a respectful crowd, as Boston crowds are apt to be.

There were several stylish traps at the depot at Manchester, but as he left the car a groom in gray livery stepped up and touched his cap.

"You are for Mrs. Cromwell's, sir?"

"Yes," replied Dessalines, and followed the man to where a pair of handsome horses were harnessed to a station omnibus.

Dessalines was delighted. The ovation of the morning, the respectful interest of his fellow passengers, the demeanor of these white menials, all semiintoxicated him. In his exalted mood his future seemed very fair. He ascribed this reception of himself, in a country known to be hostile to his race, to his own personality; he decided that he was born to sway toward him the minds of men.

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The journey had pleased him; the place when he arrived, even more. Many people were driving; he thought the equipages handsomer than those met with in an English watering place; the people also seemed more attractive, the women prettier; the air of gayety was rather that of France than England.

Soon the road led out along the seashore and Dessalines was charmed; the coast, picturesque rather than bold, seemed that of England with the rude features eliminated. The houses he found attractive; bright, cheerful, of artistic if incorrect architecture. It was a clear, cool day in September and many people were abroad. Dessalines found the whole scene brightly fascinating.

Presently they entered the driveway of handsome grounds, limited in extent, unlike an English country house of similar pretensions, which would have been surrounded by a park, gardens; quite different from this little palace with its few containing acres which were unfenced, open lawn stretching to the highway with what seemed to the Haytian an almost shocking publicity.

As the carriage drew up beneath the *porte-cochère* a butler ushered him in. A rustle greeted his expectant ear and he turned to see Virginia.

"I am very glad to see you, Count Dessalines." She gave him her hand over which he bowed. "Mrs. Cromwell is paying visits; she will soon return."

"I am grateful for your goodness in permitting me to call, Miss Moultrie. I am the bearer of many messages from the Maltbys; you can imagine them; it is unnecessary to go into details."

"You left them all well?" asked Virginia.

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"Yes; but missing you sadly." He let his blue-black eyes rest upon her; it seemed to him that she had grown older since leaving England, also more beautiful. This beauty was of the kind to which he was ready to sacrifice; a beauty not alone physical but of caste. His animalism groveled before beauty of this thoroughbred type as a dog might fawn at the feet of his mistress. Physically beautiful she was, and generously so, but it was the caste which most impressed him; less that evidenced in skin and hair and delicately formed details, than the cool, perfect poise, a dignity as refreshing as an iced fruit.

"You have been some days in the United States, Count Dessalines?"

"I arrived a week ago on the French steamer; a delightful voyage. I was so fortunate as to meet some friends returning to Hayti, the Doctor and Madam Fouchère; they are friends of that dear fellow, Leyden."

"How nice; and speaking of Leyden, do you know where he is at present?"

"In England; it is possible that he may go to the Orinoco this autumn."

"Let us go out on the veranda," said Virginia. "It faces the sea and the air is delightful." She led the way through the house and out through glass doors. Dessalines, following her, exclaimed with pleasure.

"But this is charming! I had no thought of finding such a picturesque spot. I had expected that it would be wild, savage, with great trees and boulders and crags over which the waves foamed. I have read 'Evangeline.' He was a great poet, your Longfellow. This is like England, is it not?"

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"It is called New England," replied Virginia. Her hazel eyes rested curiously upon the negro as he examined the scene before him with expressions of keen delight. "Do you find it as beautiful as Hayti?"

"Ah, Hayti!" cried Dessalines. "But that is different; Hayti is a rose eaten by insects; a garden despoiled and neglected! You know we are in utter confusion there."

"So I have read." Virginia dropped upon a swinging seat; Dessalines remained standing. She had many times noticed this mannerism, a preference for the erect rather than for a sitting posture. A negro does not like to sit; he will stand, squat, or lounge. Dessalines possessed in full this racial peculiarity.

From his great height he looked down at Virginia, his face thoughtful, troubled; with Dessalines the one entailed the other.

"It was this which brought me; I am on my way to Hayti. You already know of my ambition, Miss Moultrie; I believe that my time is ripe!"

Virginia was thrilled, this time less by the *timbre* of the great musical voice than by the words the ideas conveyed. She half-raised herself, eyes aglow, breath coming quickly. Dessalines, as he stood before her staring out to sea, his expression thoughtful, troubled, perplexed, seemed striving to search the infinite; primitive man, half-baffled, contemplating his first coördinated plan; yet he was imposing. To Virginia he seemed to typify the negro race; a looming, colossal figure standing on the threshold of humanity, at the door of the council chamber, puzzled, bewildered, awed, yet stubbornly demanding the right to speak in conclave.

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A more clever negro, one confidant, assured, cunning, diplomatic, would have been less impressive to the girl; a mulatto unimpressive altogether. Dessalines was typical. She believed him to be honest, earnest. She believed his ambitions for his country to be minor to those for his race, his personal ambitions least of all. His aspect of doubt affected her strongly; her sympathy went out to him in his struggle.

"Do you still wish to rule?" she asked in a low voice.

His slumberous eyes rested on her for a moment before he replied, then the great voice welled out like the growl of a lion.

"I *shall* rule, Miss Moultrie. I would not tell this to any but you. In a month's time I shall be regent of Hayti—then *emperor!*" The word boomed forth resonantly; the massive head was raised proudly.

Virginia, always as keenly alive to an impression as the film of a camera, was thrilled through and through. The words rang in her ears. "I shall be king," all that the words contained! King, Prophet, Educator, Wise Despot of a rich island teeming with a savage population. The great negro who stood before her, staring at the ocean beneath his lowering brows, would be this one. She caught her breath with a gasp and the color fled from her face as she looked at him. Virile, crude, uncouth, unable to cope mentally with a brain of multiplex convolutions, it was such a one who must lead his groping people out of the shadow. No white man ever could do it; no mulatto ever could do it; it was the work of a negro, and she believed that it was the work of the one who stood before her, and the thought filled

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her with exultation even while his labored doubts led her heart out to him in his uncertainty.

"I believe in you, Count Dessalines!" she cried impulsively, and half-reached him her hand. It was a swift gesture, but before she could recover he had turned with the lithe, quick grace of a tiger, caught the hand in his huge black one, and stooped over it.

A thousand shudders swept through the girl as the thick lips, bulging, surplus, soft as the cheek of a mushroom, brushed her fingers; every nerve, fiber, tendril in her exquisite organization screamed in shocked protest against the physical contact; every invisible barrier which separates the races seemed struggling to resist. This flood of outraged impulses overcame her for the instant; objects whirled; the sea arose in a great tidal wave about to inundate the earth; her pulses sang in her ears; and then, as her will grappled with her instincts and clamped them to do her bidding, the swift sensation passed. Dessalines had loosed her hand, and glancing at him Virginia saw that his features were twitching and his eyes brimming with tears. Pity, sympathy, swept away the last of her qualms.

"Ah, Miss Moultrie!" he cried, "if you could realize what that belief means to me! If you knew how I am torn between confidence and doubts! You are the only person to whom I have told these things—expressed my fears of my own strength, my power, my ability—whatever it is which goes to make a ruler! What is it?" he demanded fiercely. "I have education, money, influence, advice; there is an army of picked men ready to respond to my call; the Haytians are not a fighting people; in ten days' time the arms and munitions will be

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landed by my agent; it should be so simple! I am not afraid," he filled his great chest and glared savagely out at the blue water, "for another it would seem so easy! How simple it would be for *Leyden*!" The black face was troubled, perplexed; the fullness had left the voice; it had the querulous note of a complaining child.

Virginia glanced at him in swift surprise; the change was so sudden, this transition from confidence to doubt. The Prophet had suddenly confused his oracles, the Guide had lost his way, the Pilot run upon a shoal; yet there was in the voice a childish helplessness that stirred her pity more than it awakened her contempt. It called upon the maternal; this great, groping brain, struggling toward the light had been enmeshed, fallen into a quicksand, was suddenly bewildered, and called to her for aid.

"Those ideas come to everyone who is called upon to play a central part, Count Dessalines. There are bound to be doubts and fears not of one's duty but of oneself. You must close your ears and eyes to them, work steadily on, and accept the issue. It is not for yourself that you fear; it is for the great and sacred responsibility which you have assumed."

She paused; the expression of despair had been swept from his face as cumulus clouds drift across the sky to band the earth with sun and shadow. The dull look had left the dark, metallic eyes.

"You must not dwell upon these doubts," continued Virginia. "Probably there never lived a man of your race more fully equipped for this task than you."

"*Ah!*" interrupted Dessalines, "it is true. You are right." The face was aglow again, inspired, confident. "It is the height of my ambition for my people which

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so appalls me, and—" his voice grew sepulchral—" the profound depths from which they must be raised. I could tell you things of Hayti, Miss Moultrie, which would appall you; which you would find difficult to believe." The thin note of despondency was creeping again into his voice.

"It is always more difficult to save a people from themselves than from another, but that is why you are so wonderfully chosen for this work. You are one of them; you understand them; you love them!"

"Ah, yes, I *love* them! They are my people!" The black face was radiant. "They must be saved—and," the face grew stern again, "they must be purged of their iniquities!"

"But you have also the strength."

"Yes!" cried Dessalines, "you are right; I have the strength. My men are ready and waiting; my arms are by this time aboard my vessel; the work goes on under the management of a shrewd and honest man, my agent, a Jew."

In eager, voluble words he began to sketch his campaign. Virginia leaned forward, both hands on the chains of her swinging chair, listened fascinated, enthralled, held with parted lips and sparkling eyes, drinking his words thirstily.

"There is Nord Alexis at Cape Haitien, an able man, but unable to pass through Gonaïves because Jean Jumeau, delegate at that place, who is acting in the interest of Firmin, will not permit it. The other men who cherish ambitions for the presidency are Pierre and Fouchard, both coming from the South, and each pulling against the other; they are all pulling against each

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other. Then there is this *débauché*, Killik, who commands the *Crête-à-Pierrot*. He is not to be feared as he has no backing, no money, and will soon be out of coal and supplies, unless he attempts to take them by force from some vessel of a foreign power, and this he will hardly be fool enough to do. My supplies will be dropped at the different places where my men are located. My plan is to sail at once for Hayti; next I shall destroy or capture the *Crête-à-Pierrot*, and storm Port au Prince by sea and land."

Dessalines' eyes sparkled; his voice rang with enthusiasm; one could never have believed that this was the same man who, five minutes' before, had bewailed his inefficiency.

"And then?" asked Virginia eagerly.

"Then—" the eyes flashed, the sable face glowed, the massive chest arched. "My victorious troops shall acclaim me Dessalines the Second, Liberator, *Empereur de Haiti!*"

Virginia's eyes glistened; tremors ran through her; her cheeks were flushed. She tried to speak, stammered, laughed hysterically.

Dessalines' face was radiant, his whole great physique vibrant, exhilarated, semiintoxicated at the rush of emotion with which his eloquence inspired him.

"Ah, but you give me courage!" he cried. "You make me feel that I am indeed like the great tyrant Napoleon, a man of destiny! You seem to point out to me my star as it hangs high in the zenith!" His opaque eyes rested on the beautiful, intense face of the girl, and Virginia meeting them with her own saw the pupils dilate . . . they held her strangely.

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"If there were a woman like you, Miss Moultrie," began Dessalines, and his throaty voice throbbed like a bass note of an organ, "a woman with mind and soul and heart—" The deep organ note vibrated; it purred; the purr of some great, striped, jungle cat wooing its mate in the shaded depths of an equatorial forest. "If there were one to be with me, both now and afterwards; one of higher and finer mold, who could direct the great strength of my brain and body, inspire me with confidence," the voice rumbled on, the words lost to Virginia who seemed only to see the swelling pupils, each of which held a twin flame and, as the girl watched, these seemed to coalesce and blur, then fly apart again, "some one who could share my ambitions and my throne!" He swayed slightly toward her.

Virginia drew back shuddering; the lawn, the sea beyond grew vague, whirled together. Dessalines seemed to swell, to mount, to tower like a great black genius summoned from space by some unconscious act of her own. One hand flew to her throat, barely choked back a scream. Dessalines, lost in his fancies, did not see her strangling emotion.

"Did I not once tell you of my highest ambition, Miss Moultrie?" he continued in the same vibrantly caressing voice, "of my dream for bringing about the union of our races; of eliding the point of separation bound to exist while there is a sharply drawn 'color line,' as it is called in this heathen country? Do you not think such a thing possible . . . surely *you* do not share in the popular antipathy which is claimed by some to be felt toward my race?"

Virginia, recovered in the respite when he had taken

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his eyes from hers, and now fighting hard to control the revulsion which impelled her almost irresistibly to rush shrieking from his presence, was unable to formulate a reply. Dessalines, led into a new train of thought by this query, stood for a moment in silence.

"What is it?" he asked, and an odd fretfulness had entered his voice. "Have we not the same souls, the same God, the same heaven? We feel no repulsion to the whites, why should they feel it toward us?" The childish querulousness had all returned. "I do not understand this spirit; it is not a Christian spirit; it is, must be displeasing to God. Is it because my people have been for so many years in slavery? Why are not we as good as anyone else? Why do they call us 'niggers' and speak of us as if we were dogs and animals and worse? I do not understand such things."

Virginia recognized the puzzled, angry child. The tone was peevish, almost whimpering. Like a flash the revulsion left her; she was filled with a sense of remoteness, infinite wisdom as compared with this childish, groping intellect, made peevish by a question with which his primitive brain was unable to grapple; voicing his perplexities in a series of persistent "whys."

"You must not vex yourself with such questions now," she answered, "you have enough to occupy all of your thoughts. Afterwards . . . when you are established it will be time enough to consider these things."

The black face changed as if by magic.

"Come," said Virginia quietly, "here is Mrs. Cromwell's carriage; she is anxious to meet you." She led the way through the swinging doors.

CHAPTER XVI

DESSALINES' PRAYER

DURING Dessalines' absence Rosenthal had gone ahead rapidly with his preparations for the campaign. Had he not known the character of Admiral Killik and the demoralized condition of his worthless crew, Rosenthal would have entertained grave doubts concerning the ability of his vessel to cope with the *Crête-à-Pierrot*. He knew Killik, however, for an adventurer; his negro crew utterly unreliable, and at most times ashore or lying half-drunk about the vessel. Moreover the Jew had confidence in Dessalines so far as his physical courage was concerned, especially when supported by himself. The *Waccamaw* was well armed with six six-pounders and the two field pieces which were to be mounted on the berth deck and could be trained through the freight ports.

Rosenthal personally was a courageous man; in fact, considering the size of the stake, he felt an actual zest for the throw which was to decide it. With him valor was inspired by profit; glory could not have awakened it; in this he was a direct atavism to the early Phœnician merchant pirate.

The element which caused him the greatest disquiet was the selection of the two officers, captain and mate, required to navigate the *Waccamaw*. There were several men of his acquaintance whom he might have selected had he not been pressed for time. As it was

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he had been obliged to refer the matter to Mr. Mallock, the head of a firm which had found the sinews for more than one filibustering enterprise. Mallock, like the Jew, was a man of utter financial honesty. Although continually involved in illegal ventures he had the reputation all through the West Indies, Central and South America, of a man whose word was inviolate. Mallock was respected in Colombia, feared in Santo Domingo, dreaded in Venezuela, and trusted everywhere. He had been candid with Rosenthal.

"I can get you two men to fill these billets," he had said. "One is an old rascal, the other a young rascal; both are sneeringly fearless and both are good seamen and navigators. I think that they will play fair with you, but I will not guarantee them. I have specified in their contracts that they are not to leave the vessel until after you have met the *Crête* and landed your troops; it will be your lookout to see that they are not tampered with. My advice would be that if one of them goes ashore—breaks his agreement—to go ahead without him and take your chances on handling the thing yourself. You certainly are competent to do that."

Rosenthal had smiled; his heavy mustache had drawn up and outward, baring a diamond-shaped expanse of yellow teeth.

"I shall try to do better than that, Mr. Mallock. If one of these fellows, whom I shall have watched, attempts to go ashore he will do so on his face with a hole through the top of his head." Again the smile.

"That is a good plan, too," Mallock had replied. "You know your business, Brother Rosenthal; the Cuban and Venezuelan affairs have given you a good schooling

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and if you only knew how to lay a course and get the sun you might do away with this difficulty. It is a pity that it is not a month later; I could provide you with a pair of the most honest cutthroats that ever stole a ship. Men of principle in their profession, like ourselves. You need have no doubt about your engineer, he is far too cantankerous to be approached by anybody; moreover he is engaged in translating the 'Life of John the Baptist' into Norwegian and that will take all of his time. There is nothing so satisfactory in this sort of work as a consistent crank." And so the conversation had ended.

Rosenthal had dealt honestly with Dessalines. He knew that his employer's resources would be severely taxed before the close of his campaign and in his own mind he was not so sure that further assistance would be forthcoming. He, Rosenthal, had more to gain through the success of the campaign than he could have effected by the most flagrant dishonesty, even had he been dishonest, which he was not. He was anxious for Dessalines to succeed; after that if he, Rosenthal, did not succeed he felt that he would be a very stupid fellow.

Dessalines arrived in New York at noon and was met at the depot by his agent.

"*Mon cher Comte!*" cried the Jew, talking rapidly and in French, "of course you have not heard the news?"

"No," replied Dessalines quickly, "tell me!"

"One moment; it is necessary to be discreet. When we are in the cab, my dear fellow!" With the aid of Jules and the porter, Dessalines' luggage was secured and placed on the coach. Jules sat with the driver.

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"Quick, my friend!" exclaimed Dessalines as they started. "I die of curiosity."

"Then let me tell you that the *Crête-à-Pierrot* is destroyed and Admiral Killik killed."

"It cannot be true!" cried Dessalines.

"There can be no doubt of the accuracy of my information. The facts are these: This absurd Killik, after declaring himself a pirate, soon finds himself in need of supplies. Now it happens that the Provisional Government had shipped by the German steamship *Markomannia*, arms and ammunition for Nord Alexis at Cape Haitien. This fool Killik, who although denying any authority, had been supporting Firmin, sees fit to declare these munitions contraband of war, and accordingly about the end of last month he meets the German steamer at sea near Cape Haitien and with profuse threats to captain and crew takes possession of the arms and ammunition."

"*Mon Dieu!*" gasped Dessalines.

Rosenthal continued. "On September 6th the German cruiser *Panther* entered the harbor of Port au Prince, whence she proceeded with sealed orders to St. Marc in search of the *Crête-à-Pierrot*. Thence she went to Gonaïves, where she found her lying in harbor, practically deserted by officers and crew, who were all ashore together indulging in a debauch. The *Panther* signalled for the *Crête* to surrender and orders were given to open fire upon the Haytian vessel at the first attempt of anyone on board her to serve a gun. It seems that while the *Panther* was signalling and was on the point of sending a prize crew to take possession, a small explosion occurred upon the after deck of the *Crête*. This is sup-

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posed to have been an attempt on the part of one of the drunken crew to blow up the vessel with all on board."

"*Seigneur!*" rumbled Dessalines' deep voice.

"It appears that Admiral Killik, his surgeon, and two or three of the crew, all suffering from the effects of their debauch, had returned. The admiral, it is to laugh, my dear Comte, was suffering from a wound in the hand where he had been bitten by one of his sailors! One says that both the surgeon and the admiral had attempted to blow up the vessel; but whatever the cause, the effect was to draw the fire of the *Panther*, and after she had delivered a dozen or more shots from her rapid-firing guns the *Crête* began to sink, not having fired a shot. With her sank the admiral, the doctor, and two of the sailors, all too drunk to swim for their lives!"

Rosenthal concluded, and as he did so, leaned toward Dessalines as if to embrace him, but the negro drew slightly back. The congratulation of his agent seemed at the moment out of place, insufficient, flippant. Dessalines was overcome by the news; he was startled, numbed; his faculties lacked the rapidity to absorb it; he contemplated slowly the fact that the last serious impediment had been miraculously swept from his path. With the death of the mad white admiral, his success seemed assured; all things were working toward his ends.

His thick voice was caught in a sob. "It is necessary to be grateful to a Divine Providence," he said in a choking voice. His throat seemed to swell, the tears gushed from his eyes, his voice was inarticulate. Rosenthal, accustomed as he was to the Gallicized African, watched him curiously and in silence.

He knew Dessalines to be deeply religious; this was

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the most profound quality in the negro's character, and was less the result of precept than a natural reaching out for the sublime. The Haytian was not strongly Christian; the meek Saviour failed to inspire him, but the vision of an omnipotent, omnipresent, brow-brooding Jehovah was the acme of his imaginative heights. He prayed seldom but then volubly, groveling, flat on his face, his great frame rent with convulsive heavings. When he did wrong, he dreamed of hell.

Dessalines' sense of right and wrong was instinctive, but extreme. Since his conversion to his new, stern, uncondoning Protestant faith, he had not been guilty of a single lapse. Lust, perhaps, stood at the head of his sinful category and represented hell in its direst form; he shivered while he panted. There had been times when he would have flogged his naked body with brambles had such a course been suggested to him, these flagellations being less punitive than chastening.

His earnest wish was for Truth; his infrequent, frenzied prayers for Purity. One may say that this is not characteristic, not typical. If one studies the negro he will find it to be true.

Rosenthal eyed him with the uncomfortable sense of lacking comprehension which sometimes comes over one when a nature excessively transparent reveals unlooked for depths.

"This saves us money," he observed presently. "That is if Mallock will take back some of the guns."

Dessalines roused himself as a dog shakes after a plunge.

"It is better to retain them." The negro had no conception of economy; he had no idea of when to cease

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spending. His imagination was unable to grapple with want in the abstract.

"But we should economize, my friend," protested Rosenthal. "Myself, I have haggled over every dollar spent. If there is no *Crête* why spend money unnecessarily for guns?"

"We will find it easier to get back the money paid for the guns with them, than without them," said Dessalines sententiously.

This flash of statecraft impressed the Jew. It was accidental; nevertheless it was there and Rosenthal assented almost with respect.

Dessalines was silent for several minutes. Rosenthal heard him muttering to himself; he was aware of this mannerism of a negro when deeply stirred; alone, Dessalines would have talked aloud.

"It is a sign!" he burst out so suddenly that Rosenthal started. The Jew had been deep in his own imaginings which were purely practical. "It is a sign, my friend; an omen! God intends that I shall win! I have felt it in my heart. It has been permitted me to see visions . . . like Jeanne d'Arc." Dessalines' voice arose, the protruding eyes rolled, he was possessed. "With the loss of the *Crête*, Firmin's chances are over, yet this blow has been sufficiently delayed to block the descent of Nord Alexis from the North. Pierre and Fouchard are at a deadlock. Jean Jumeau, who still holds Gonaïves, will prevent Nord Alexis from reaching Port au Prince. Ah, if we were but there! The opportunity hangs like a mango ripe for the plucking."

Dessalines' emotion had passed; now he trembled with eagerness, with suppressed action. Rosenthal felt

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the great shoulder muscles tighten and relax against his own; the deep voice rumbled in a bass key which undertoned the traffic of the streets.

"Push your work of preparation to the utmost, my dear Rosenthal!" exclaimed Dessalines suddenly. "I die of impatience. Advance the hour of our sailing. Believe me," his voice grew sonorous, contained a regal ring, "you will not find Dessalines ungrateful!"

Rosenthal turned away his head to hide a smile. "We will do our best, *majesté*," he replied.

Dessalines, delighted, laughed aloud; clapped his agent on the shoulder, embraced him, called him a dear fellow.

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A week later found the *Waccamaw* in the Gulf Stream. The day had been one of tension, disquiet. The oppressive air, the mission, had tautened nerves; there had been friction between Rosenthal and the two officers; its cause, a lacking respect in the attitude of the two men toward Dessalines. The hardened old captain and the vicious youthful mate had seen a side of the Semitic character which their joint voyagings had never shown them. A smiling assurance of physical damage from a Jew who stood ferociously ready to put his threat into execution had perhaps awed them more than the threat itself. Rosenthal had won his point, threatened violence, then invited them to drink. He was a competent man.

At midnight Dessalines awoke; his slumbers had been nervous and fitful. The African is not a deep sleeper; he is indolent; rests at odd intervals, like a dog, a cat, any primitive creature. In the deep night he will awake,

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listen, twitch, peer, often arise and prowl when a white man will be fathoms deep in oblivion.

Dessalines lay upon his bunk and listened to the throb of the machinery. The *Waccamaw* was a good ship; she ran smoothly "in a groove," true as a liner. The brokers had played fair; Rosenthal had played fair; Dessalines had bought a good vessel cheaply. Her machinery held no false notes; no rough sounds.

Dessalines listened to the throb and beat and found himself adapting the time to an English evangelical hymn which had always stirred him. He began to voice the words to the thrust from the great cylinders, the click of the eccentric, the jar of the circulating pump:

"Mine eyes shall see the glory of the coming of the Lord!"

It was the only verse which he remembered, but this made no difference. With negro infatuation for monotony, he repeated it over and over with no sense of sameness. "Mine eyes shall see the glory of the coming of the Lord!"—"Mine eyes shall see the glory of the coming of the Lord!"—"Mine eyes shall see the glory of the coming of the Lord!"

The result was predestined. The Negro, the Arab, the Kanaka, all primitive races can develop a hypnotic or, better, fanatic frenzy by means of the erosion produced by the same repeated impulse on a single group of cells of the nerves of sight or hearing; a drum, a chant, revolving lights, the result is the same. Dessalines, first thinking, then humming, then murmuring these words to the rhythmic swing of the machinery, soon found himself upon the point of shouting: "Mine

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eyes shall see the glory of the coming of the Lord!" and soon he found that he was chanting the words full-toned, while the stirring of Jules and Rosenthal in their bunks told him that they had been awakened.

Sleep was impossible. He leaped from his bunk and made his way on deck in his pajamas. The night was dark as a night in the Gulf Stream can be.

The day had been sultry, humid; the air aqueous with the soddenness of that broad, tropical river flowing its even course through the ocean as if confined in banks of clay. Dessalines passed beneath the bridge, on up into the eyes, where he found a negro lookout stationed. This man he utterly disregarded. He was an American, a peasant, doubtless filled with superstitious awe at the weird shapes floating in the murk and the soft voices talking in the wind.

It was blowing a fresh gale ahead and gaining in weight as the night wore on. The ship was snoring into the short, head sea; the white fire flaming from her bows and whirling astern in blazing eddies. Dessalines, as far forward as he could go, leaned in the angle of the bow, straining forward, staring at the shrouded horizon. There was the reek of brine in the wet wind and a weight as of solid water which failed to satisfy his deep-lunged craving for air. The drench of the spray upon his naked chest was warm as the wind and no more humid.

For long he stood there, his head whirling with each soaring plunge; his brain reeling with wild fancies; one displacing the other, even as the racing swells swept past the flying bows. He could not think; his mind failed to detain one single hurrying fancy; his whole

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great being was plastic as the sea driven by the rush of the gale.

Then as the night deepened the sea began to swarm with life. Dessalines leaned lower and watched the fiery trails of the sea folk as they tore apart the solid water beneath the flaming crests of the billows. Schools of porpoises swept past, lashing the sea into a maelstrom of lambent fire; far in the depths mammoth hydrozoa glowed pale and diaphanous with each expansion of their pendulous disks. Strange monsters plunged beneath the keel, leaving the trails of comets; and the wash of the sea across the sloping decks poured from the scuppers in a spray of bluish flame.

And then the heavens began to answer the conflagrations of the deep. Back rolled the soggy rain clouds, to leave the sky as clear and deep as a sapphire with the stars aquiver as seen through the rushing wind. It was the month of meteors, and as the Haytian's eyes, giddied by the swirl of water, turned aloft, a *bolide* drifted across the course and exploded with the brilliance of a costern light. Down came the meteors in showers, now here, now there, crossing and recrossing and seaming the clear sky with trails of fire.

The negro at his elbow was muttering to himself. Dessalines did not hear him; into his brain there rushed the grand, inspiring words of the nineteenth psalm. He raised his face, the features working, writhing, his soul filled with an agony of exaltation; an exaltation born of the pale fires in the sea and the blazing night as it roared across the Gulf Stream. He threw out both great arms, wrists bent, palms turned upward; the tremendous voice burst with a roar from the heaving chest:

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"The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork!"

"Great God! Great Jehovah, look Thou this night upon thy laboring creature. Even as this ship strives on through the black darkness of the night, reaching for the goal she cannot see, even so do I, omnipotent Lord, strive on blindly groping, my course directed by the compass of Thy word. Grant me strength, O Jehovah! Grant me wisdom; grant me patience in adversity, and beyond all, O Thou whose myriad subject universes blaze now before my awe-struck eyes, grant me a pure soul, a clean heart, to lead my people out of the shadow!"

He fell upon his knees. His great forearms resting on the rail pillowed the massive head; the recumbent body was torn with convulsive sobs.

For an hour he prayed, an uncouth, huddled mass; prayed aloud, while the awe-struck negro behind him listened shivering. Fragments of frenzied eloquence, carried on the flaws of wind to the bridge, sent quivers down the spine of the hardened adventurer in command of the vessel. The night passed its perihelion; the first rosy lights of the swift tropic dawn began to glow; the phosphorescence paled, then departed sullenly.

Dessalines' prayer was over, had given way to a deep and peaceful meditation; slowly his transfigured soul descended from its exalted heights. The wheel and lookout had been relieved. A new negro was at the elbow of the Haytian; the vicious, boyish mate had relieved the captain.

"*La-and Oh-o!*" sang the lookout suddenly. Dessalines started, raised his head, stared out across the lightning sea.

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"Where away?" bawled the sleepy boy upon the bridge.

"Dade ahaid, sah! High lan', sah!" sang the negro.

Dessalines strained his eyes, but though good they were not sea-eyes. The mate was staring through his glasses. Previously he had been watching Dessalines curiously.

"It's the Mole, all right," he answered with a grin. "If you come up here, general, you can make it out through the glass." The two officers had in a semi-mockery irritating to both Dessalines and Rosenthal conferred this title upon their negro employer.

Dessalines ascended the ladder. From the bridge, as the day swiftly lightened, he did not need the glass. Far on the horizon the rough, mountainous outline of the savage island raised blue and hazy from the ultramarine sea.

For the moment Dessalines could scarcely speak; his emotion overcame him. The youthful mate, glancing at him curiously, could see the vibration of the huge, black, naked chest.

"It is the Mole St. Nicholas!" exclaimed Dessalines. "Hayti!" His eyes rolled, the flat nostrils dilated; the thick lips rolled back and the white teeth flashed; an expression of such savage ferocity, exultation, contorted the grotesque features that the watch officer, hardened as he was, drew back, startled, appalled.

"Hayti!" roared Dessalines. He threw out an arm with a gesture of greeting. "*Bon jour, belle Haiti!*" He smote his chest a blow with his clinched fist. "*Haiti!—Haiti!—ta renaissance est arrivée!*"

CHAPTER XVII

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DESSALINES, Rosenthal, and Jules were deep in consultation in the main saloon.

The *valet de chambre* had proved himself discreet and subtle. Since the beginning of his campaign Dessalines had confided in him without reserve; on all occasions he asked his counsel.

The two were honest friends. There is no doubt that the birdlike little Frenchman cherished for his black master a sincere liking as well as an unbounded admiration. True, he was very proud of Dessalines; proud of the sensation he produced wherever he went; proud to be in his service, and no doubt with something of the pride of the keeper of a wild animal supposed to be dangerous but known by the tamer to be quite docile. Deeper than this was Jules's real devotion to Dessalines, enhanced as it was by a sense of obligation and responsibility evoked by the Titan weaknesses of the great negro—the devotion of the mind to the body.

Dessalines was intensely fond of Jules. The little fellow flattered him; cheered him when depressed; called back his self-confidence; made him laugh. He was a great fellow for grimaces, was Jules. He could twist his birdlike features into contortions at the ludicrous effect of which Dessalines would throw himself on the floor and roll in a paroxysm of mirth. Then Jules could

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dress him as no other person could have done; he was a skilled *maître d'hôtel*; could devise ingenious entertainments for his guests, as in the matter of the 'riki-shas at his water party. Quite recently he had discovered that Jules possessed a mind far superior to his own, but this carried no jealousy. Of course not! Had he wished could he not have squeezed the life from the valet with one hand as one squeezes an orange?

Jules and Rosenthal also cherished mutual esteem. Jules was too much a man of the world to look down upon Rosenthal because he was a Jew; also, he had scrutinized Rosenthal closely and decided that he would deal honestly by his master. The little Frenchman had seen at once that the Jew was laid out on broad lines; no dishonesty with him would be a theft, it would be a financial *coup*. He knew the influence of Rosenthal upon his master. Dessalines, in truth, was very fond of him; trusted him, admired his mind and energy. Jules saw that the Jew would spare nothing to place Dessalines in power. Then, very properly, he would ask for and receive a bonus; a subsidy; special export duties for his coffee or timber grants. As for the agent, he knew that if successful he had but to ask. Dessalines was generous.

Their conference contained no element of dissension; the three mutually friendly, mutually respectful; their floreate expressions were not rococo, they gilded strong sentiments.

These three men are not such infrequent types as one might think; there are to be met many such if one travels their paths. These were rather admirable characters; they possessed courage, generosity, ambition, loyalty.

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A map of Hayti was spread upon the table; on its geographical features there were inscribed in the fine, accurate hand of the Jew, countless notes, figures, memoranda in different colored inks. Each of the three men had committed these memoranda to memory. This had been a baffling task for Dessalines. The figures rioted elusively through his brain; the fine schedules, *schema*, devised by Rosenthal and commended by Jules, bewildered him; on the other hand he knew the country itself, the topographical features, the relative distances, the time necessary to traverse a district, everything pertaining to mobilization. He knew Hayti well, having ridden over much of it; what he did not know he felt. For locality, bearings, direction, the negro had the head of a hound.

Rosenthal laid both hands on the rim of the table and thrust himself violently backward. His swarthy face was flushed and under the black, bushy, Mephistophelian eyebrows, which drew a straight line from temple to temple, his agate-colored eyes, with their multiple spots of light brown, glinted with excitement. For a moment he pondered, beating a tattoo with his strong fingers, and the click of the heavy rings he wore rang like castanets.

"Let us sum up, my friend," he remarked suddenly. "One cannot too fully impress upon the mind the general plans of campaign." He paused and stroked his black imperial.

"Proceed, my dear fellow," said Dessalines. Jules cocked his birdlike head and his beady eyes flitted from Rosenthal's face to the map.

"We are now off the Mole," began Rosenthal; "we

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are a British tramp steamer bound for Curaçao; our captain has been paid by Comte Dessalines to set him ashore *en route* at St. Marc." He glanced at the others.

"*Bon*," gurgled Dessalines.

"At St. Marc," pursued Rosenthal, "Monsieur le Comte, accompanied by Maître Jules, will go ashore, proceeding at once to Port au Prince where he will examine the political situation and confer with General Lin Miragoâne who has five hundred men in the environs of Port au Prince. Monsieur le Comte will then proceed to La Coupe, where he will be the guest of the Fouchères, thus disarming suspicion of political activity."

"*Bon*," muttered Dessalines.

"In the meantime," continued Rosenthal, "our dear friend and ally, General Tirésias Bisoton, on sighting our vessel from St. Marc, will proceed to a point five miles down the coast, where he will be taken aboard and pilot us to a point six miles south of Gonaïves, where we will embark the two hundred disaffected Firminists under General Soult; thence we will proceed to Jeremie to receive the hundred and fifty men under Monsieur le Duc de La Fitte; thence to Anse-à-Veau for the two hundred men of the General Peligro; thence to Grand Goâve, where it is safe to say that we may count upon one hundred and fifty men, friends of my own."

"*Bon*," muttered Dessalines.

"When all is in readiness in Grand Goâve," continued Rosenthal, "I will dispatch a courier to Monsieur le Comte at La Coupe. The man will have a slip of paper upon which will be written two numbers: the first, the day of the month upon which our emperor-elect shall march down upon Port au Prince at the head of his

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brave following; the second, the hour at which he may expect us to begin to land our troops under the protection of our six-pounders."

"Bon," muttered Dessalines deeply.

"So much for our general plans," said Rosenthal briskly, "and now, dear friends, let us apply ourselves to the details."

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Dessalines leaned upon the rail and stared moodily at the land as the *Waccamaw* steamed slowly into the charming bay of St. Marc. The sun was getting low; the afternoon shower had come and gone; the lustrous, tropic foliage, still wet and glistening, flashed and glittered and sparkled in the rich, ripe, mellow sunshine. But two vessels, one a sailing ship, were lying in the port and these rode light, a broad band of smutty green in the one case and red in the other denoting that trade was at a standstill as the result of the several-sided revolution. Along the beach were the usual heaps of *compèche*; but little coffee, cotton, or cacao was in evidence. Apparently some work of a sporadic character was going on about the picturesque ruins of the old French fort, but this appeared to be desultory and half-hearted.

At a few furlongs from the beach the telegraph rang sharply; the propeller sucked the water astern and the anchor splashed overboard. Several boats were alongside, and a moment later the vessel was boarded by a stout mulatto who claimed to be the harbor master. At the sight of Dessalines he started, then came forward, his bland yellow face wreathed in smiles.

"Ah, mon cher Comte Dessalines! C'est vraiment vous!" They embraced.

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"But, yes; my dear Calisthène!" cried Dessalines. "I was so unfortunate as to miss the *Hollandia*, but was lucky enough to secure a passage by this vessel the very next day. She is bound for Curaçao, but I prevailed upon our captain to set me ashore here; he was unwilling to go to Port au Prince for fear of complications."

"You have come at a critical time, my dear fellow. One hardly dares to speak; we are in frightful confusion. There is some one here now who will rejoice to see you." He watched Dessalines narrowly. "Your old friend General Miragoâne."

"I am charmed!" exclaimed Dessalines. "But come below, my dear Calisthène; I have some excellent champagne and this vessel makes ice. I am starving for the news."

He led his friend below, where Jules served them with champagne. Rosenthal, of course, did not appear.

"Is your captain then not anxious to proceed at once?" inquired Calisthène, and again his chocolate-colored eyes examined Dessalines covertly. The latter, was, however, diplomatic. Though finding it difficult to keep traces of real emotion from his mobile features he possessed the animal cunning requisite to disguise the cause of this emotion.

"He is first anxious to see if it will not be possible to secure a little coffee or cacao now that he is here; also, they must land my horse."

"Your horse!"

"Yes, an American horse, a beautiful animal. But tell me," he exclaimed, "what is the news? The political situation?"

The mulatto exhibited some nervousness. "One can

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scarcely say. You have heard of course of the destruction of the *Crête-à-Pierrot*?"

"Yes, yes."

"Since that event it is said that Firmin is losing ground. One says that he has enemies here." The eyes of the mulatto grew catlike. "I doubt if he will continue his efforts. Jean Jumeau, his general, still occupies Gonaïves, and as long as he can hold that place Nord Alexis is walled up in the north. Fouchard, in the south, has sent an expedition against Firmin. They will probably meet at Petit Goâve, where there will no doubt be a bloody encounter."

"And at Port au Prince?"

"The Chamber has elected Boissard Canal as President of the Provisional Government. Really, my dear comte, poor Hayti is at the mercy of the strongest arm. One cannot hold political opinions. Myself, I mind my business and sell my coffee for as much as I can get, which is little enough, God knows!"

Dessalines turned away to hide his exultation.

"You are proceeding to Port au Prince, of course," said Calisthène presently. "I do not think that the captain of this vessel will get any coffee to carry; the trade is practically controlled by the Holland and German lines; the freights are very low. In that case I beg that you will honor me by being my guest until tomorrow."

Dessalines bowed. "I shall be delighted! I am most fortunate; and now if you will excuse me I will attend to the landing of my horse. Could you procure me a lighter, my dear friend. He is a very fine animal; I dislike to swim him to the beach."

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The mulatto politely acceded and went on deck to give the necessary orders. Dessalines went to Rosenthal's stateroom.

"I will bid you *au revoir*, my friend. General Miragoâne has been here and is no doubt already on his way to the *rendez-vous*."

"And the situation?" asked Rosenthal. Dessalines in a few words put him in possession of the facts given him by the mulatto.

In their delight the two embraced.

"There is nothing more to be said?" asked Dessalines.

"I can think of nothing, my king!" exclaimed the Jew. "It now remains only to act. Haste is necessary. Our blows must be swift, strong, and final. And now, once more, *au revoir*! When next I greet you may it be as emperor!" Again they embraced, Dessalines so overcome by his emotion that he was unable to speak. Dashing the tears from his eyes he returned to the deck and a moment later was convulsed with laughter at the frantic struggles of his horse as the animal was lowered into a lighter.

Dessalines went ashore with his friend. The sun had set; the swift, tropic day was falling. As they proceeded to the house of Calisthène he caught the glow of the port light on the *Waccamaw* as she headed down the coast.

A short walk brought them to the home of the mulatto. It was a bungalow, somewhat pretentious, shabby, placed in the middle of a charming tropical garden. Many people, women for the most part, slipped in and out, peering, whispering, disappearing around corners.

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One caught a glimpse of fluttering garments through slanting *jalousies*; heard stifled laughter from shadowy recesses.

As they entered the yard a young lad of perhaps fifteen years approached Calisthène. The boy was a shade lighter in hue than his father; a handsome boy, with great, soft eyes and rather delicate, rounded features.

"Ah, petit Justitian!" cried the parent. "Salute the Comte Dessalines who is to be our guest."

The boy saluted Dessalines with respectful graciousness, then turned to his father.

"Dear papa, General Miragoâne received a message which made it necessary for him to return at once to Gonaïves. He set out immediately and left this note for you; also, he requested me to express his regrets for his sudden departure."

The boy's French was Parisian, perfect; the voice soft and musical.

"*Hélas!*" cried Calisthène, "it is a pity; he has missed meeting his old comrade." Again Dessalines felt the examining eyes upon him. "But never mind; we will be gay. Justitian, my heart, bid the servants fetch lights and if you love me, some fruit. It will be long since Comte Dessalines has tasted a mango."

The boy departed.

"A charming child," said Dessalines.

"Is he not? My youngest, a child by *placage*; his mother is a Dominican, almost white. Next year I shall send him to Paris for his education. He is very bright and a charming musician. You shall hear him play the flute. And now tell me all about our dear Paris; would you believe it, it is four years since I was last there.

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These troublous times! What a blessing to be rich; not to be harassed by cares of business!"

Dessalines spent a pleasant evening. As they were about to retire early, according to local custom, Calisthène remarked with a half smile:

"You are to be envied, Aristide; one does not come back to Hayti every day, and from England. *Tiens*. But what a change."

With a quick movement he arose and threw wide the French windows. From without there came in swelling chorus the soft diapason of insect orchestra; the night air was heavy with dew-cooled, tropic perfumes.

"Hear it," said Calisthène. "Smell it! Ah, Hayti is only Hayti, is it not? Justitian, *cher petit*, come bid our guest *bon soir*."

Dessalines slept ill that night; the depth of fantasy which in the negro fills the place of sentient imagination had been more stirred by the events of this day of his arrival in his native country than at any time since the first formation of his ambitious projects. The night before he had been stirred to deep religious fervor, a proper emotion; this night it was different. The glamour of the black, voluptuous island lay upon his chest; the first sight of the vivid foliage ablaze in the sensuous sunlight; the first inhalations of honey-sweet odors of jasmine and Stephanotis had sent his senses reeling; all of the animalism in him seemed to awake and stretch, yawning, then glare about with bright, eager, interested eyes; a tiger, his prototype in the lower animal world, rousing from the lap of the verdant springtide. Old memories set his muscles atwilt; old desires set his nerves atingle; his flesh throbbed.

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The casual conversation of his host had set his fancies flowing and contributed to banish sleep. Deeply religious as he was, and so with a new and powerful religion which had shone in upon him during his Oxford course with the sudden shocking illumination of a search light, he was torn between the spirit and the flesh. Waking, his fierce animalism screamed aloud; sleeping, hell blazed before his anguished eyes. Toward midnight, exhausted, he had recourse to prayer, as the night before, and so praying fell asleep and slept the night through, kneeling.

He arose early, refreshed; for his sleep, when it arrived, had been deep. Jules brought him his coffee, and when he had drunk it and eaten a mango and some fig bananas, his cheerfulness, never long absent, returned. As he was in haste to proceed Calisthène had placed two horses and a chaise at his disposal. In this he put his personal luggage in the charge of Jules and a negro driver; he himself rode upon his great American horse.

Dessalines had considered the possibility of being stopped *en route* by some of the Firminists, but even in this case it did not seem likely that he would be delayed. He was well known, respected, had never meddled in the politics of the country; his enmity would not be sought gratuitously, especially at this time when each leader needed as many friends and few enemies as was possible.

The roads were very passable and by sunset they had reached Bourassin, a village about fifty kilometers from Port au Prince. Such military bands as they encountered passed them without molestation. They reached the capital early the following day.

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Dessalines sent his effects on up the mountain to La Coupe, with a note to Madam Fouchère, begging that he be permitted to avail himself of her hospitality proffered the previous month. He himself passed around the north of Port au Prince on the outskirts of the city, to reach the residence of Général Miragoâne, one of his proposed staff, a man whom he had known from boyhood and always liked and trusted. Miragoâne was one of the ministers of the Provisional Government.

Dessalines knew the house well. Throwing the rein over a gatepost, he dismounted from his tired horse and entered the inclosure; but before he had reached the veranda a screen door was thrown open and a man burst out.

"Aristide! *Ah, m'cher camarade. Oh! Oh! Oh, m'cher!*"

A very black negro seized him in an eager embrace. Dessalines, always emotional, never failing to reciprocate warmth of feeling, kissed his friend upon the lips; they reëmbraced.

"But, my dear Aristide!" cried Miragoâne, "I have been expecting you daily!" His eyes rolled warily about him. "But we must be discreet! Come—enter; you will be my guest? That is your horse? a magnificent animal! How fat he is!"

Miragoâne was a man of the people: honest, simple, brave; illiterate, he was regarded with some contempt by the more finished Haytians, among them Dr. Fouchère. He was of medium height, very muscular, and inclined to rotundity. His skin was as black as Dessalines' own but less fine. He spoke Creole; Jules could scarcely have understood him.

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"You are too kind, Toto, dear comrade," answered Dessalines; "but I am promised to the Fouchères."

"Ah!" Miragoâne sucked in his breath in a little gasp. "You are fortunate, Aristide. La Fouchère has returned in greater beauty than ever. She spoke of you—when I saw her—one night." His manner grew furtive; then suddenly his *bonhomie* returned. He slapped Dessalines between the shoulders. "You have made an impression, you handsome rascal! Madam is interested in you; I think that you might find her kind." He sucked in his saliva thirstily. "*La-la*, I envy you!"

"You forget, my dear Toto, that I am not a gay fellow like yourself; besides, we have serious work to do."

"There is always time for love! But you are right, Dessalines. Must you then go up to La Coupe tonight?"

"Yes, but first let us go over our plans. Are we quite safe from eavesdroppers?"

"Entirely," replied Miragoâne crisply. He was a natural soldier and loved things military. "One moment; I will get my list and we will go over the thing in detail."

Their conference lasted until an hour before sunset. Miragoâne confirmed the news given to Dessalines by Calisthène. He was delighted with the thoroughness of Dessalines' preparations; praised Rosenthal highly; spoke of him as the only *leblanc* that he had ever met who was not at least half mad; promised to be ready to strike and to strike hard when the time came. It had been arranged that Dessalines should communicate with

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Rosenthal at Petit Goâve, telling him where to land the arms for the following of Miragoâne.

Dessalines remounted his rested horse and rode slowly up the steep incline to La Coupe. His heart was beating joyously. As he rode, he whistled and sang; talked to his horse, to himself, to the chattering peasants who were returning up the mountain, a long cavalcade, mostly women, sitting sideways upon the diminutive, half-starved donkeys who had carried their wares to market, and were now carrying their mistresses back, to the admonition of cruel, reckless blows across the head, the nose, the ears, from clubs which in a civilized country one would not use upon an ox. From these peasants Dessalines' appearance, style, and magnificent mount, drew cries of delight. The more attractive of the women stared at him aslant, sometimes full, challenging his attention. They received in answer a cheery word, which set them giggling and stuffing the corners of their soiled one-piece costumes into their mouths. A joke would set them ascreaming, convulsed, falling from their donkeys. One strapping wench ran after him, baring the bosom of a black Juno for his inspection. Dessalines tossed her a kindly word and a bright shilling, then touched his horse with the spur. He understood his people.

Up he went, his heart expanding for the fair promise of his prospects and the grandeur of the view below him.

Straight down the steep side of the mountain the jungle closed in, thick, dense, soft as green plush in the distance, filled with splashes of black shadow as the sun neared the crest of the ridge. Facing him, on the other side of the valley, the flat flank of the mountain blazed

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a golden green; peaks, uplifting gray, heavy masses of rain-cloud, loomed beyond. The Haytian proverb flashed across his mind: "*Derrière mornes, gagner mornes,*"—behind mountains there are mountains. The darkening valley swept away toward the sea, where it widened, became brighter, lost the sinister shadows of a chasm, and became flecked instead with bright tiled roofs. Beyond lay the sea; farther still, an azure cloud, the island of Gonâves was poised at the junction of sea and sky.

It was almost dark when he drew rein before the villa of Dr. Fouchère. It was a picturesque spot, pitched on the brink of a slope so steep as to be almost a precipice. Beneath, the valley of darkest green stretched away to the sea. Beyond, lay the city of Port au Prince, at this range a beauty spot; at close range, a foul ulcer teeming with a life of poisonous corruption. On the other hand one caught a vista of the lakes, far beneath, shimmering azure, dazzling with the reflected brilliance of the late sun. Above, rose the mountain.

As Dessalines drew in his tired but still willing horse, Jules hurried from the rear where he had been bandying *blague* with a handsome negress, the maid of Madam Fouchère, an old friend of the little Frenchman.

"Madam has been resting," he said. "She has left orders to be called upon the arrival of Monsieur le Comte."

"Then I will dare to countermand the order," replied Dessalines. "Do not permit her to be disturbed. And the doctor——?"

"He is in Port au Prince. He is expected home this evening. We thought it probable that you would meet."

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Dessalines threw his rein to Jules and walked toward the house. As he was about to ascend the steps some *jalousies* overhead rattled. A soft voice floated down from above:

"Ah, it is you, dear Dessalines! May I come down *en négligé*? I cannot wait to greet you!"

There was a *timbre* to her seductive voice; a caressing quality which made Dessalines' heart leap suddenly.

"Madam is too kind—" he began.

"And monsieur too formal, for such a dear friend as I wish him to be." Her voice held a subtle mockery. "At any rate I shall descend in a *robe de boudoir*. Jules!"

"Madam."

"You will tell Célestine to prepare some refreshment for monsieur; it is yet two hours before we dine and Monsieur le Comte must be faint. It is a frightful climb up here, and, *mon Dieu*! Such roads!"

The voice ceased; a bell rang and a maid servant passed swiftly up the stairs. Several minutes elapsed, then Dessalines heard a rustle on the threshold and turned.

"Ah, my dear Dessalines! What pleasure!"

She came toward him, both hands outstretched. She was clad in a silk kimono, a V-shaped opening beneath her white throat; her hair was dressed *à la Japonaise*, a great smoky cloud beneath which the pale, piquant face shone elfishly, the large multicolored eyes sparkling, audacious, reckless. The filmy wrap enhanced her figure; the sleeves ran back to the shoulder as she stretched both matchlessly molded arms to him, hands wide in greeting.

Dessalines almost recoiled from his rush of emotion;

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the woman's words, welcome, costume, and demoralizing beauty, all invited an adventure; he thought of the words of General Miragoâne.

Suddenly he contrasted this with the greeting of another woman but a fortnight before; a woman purely white in skin and soul. The contrast shocked him; every conscious motive of the man was toward principle, probity, decency, the things which gentlefolk do. La Fouchère tempted him sorely. Few prices would be too high to pay for the privilege of yielding to the rush of feeling which was almost overpowering him.

She looked up, smiling seductively.

"Welcome to La Coupe, *mon prince*," she murmured. The words were intended to excite him; to stroke his vanity. They acted as a cold plunge.

He was royalty elect; he was a man of destiny; his star was in the zenith; should he swerve now? He swept his great hand across his forehead and moistened his lips.

"Madam is gracious," he said, and taking her hands laid one upon the other and raised them to his lips. Just for the second her eyes flashed with savage, animal ferocity; then she laughed.

"It is necessary to be gracious to one's sovereign-to-be. 'The king can do no wrong,' else I would say that *monseigneur* was cold; does not appreciate the loyalty of his subjects." She clapped her hands. "Lights, Célestine!"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BAMBOULA

DOCTOR FOUCHÈRE returned shortly after dark. He expressed himself as delighted at seeing his guest.

This man was by far the most brilliant Haytian of Dessalines' acquaintance; his life had been spent largely in the capitals of Europe; the later association with his wife had done much to give him polish. The element which raised him most above his compatriots was the fact that he came of higher caste. There are caste grades among the African negro as with any other great race, and Fouchère was descended from the highest of these. He was a Marabout of direct descent; a breed distinct by virtue of both physical and mental superiority; his maternal grandmother was still alive; she was a *mama-loi*, at least eighty years of age; in appearance, forty.

Dessalines, fatigued by his long journey, retired early; the Fouchères did the same. Haytians retire early when they retire at all. Dessalines' sleep was deep and refreshing; at dawn he awoke brimming with strength. Jules shaved him, laid out ultra-English riding clothes, and when Dessalines descended for *déjeuner* the effect he produced upon his host and hostess was flatteringly noticable.

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In the morning Dessalines rode down the mountain to confer at greater length with General Miragoâne. The voluptuary chuckled as he greeted him.

"And La Fouchère?" he questioned. "Was she glad to see you, Aristide, *camarade*? Can you not manage to get rid of that peacock, her husband! Oh, *m'cher*! oh, oh!"

Miragoâne detested Dr. Fouchère whom he regarded with a secret awe but thought proud and un-Haytian. Fouchère spoke of Miragoâne as "*ce paysan Miragoâne*."

"*Mon Général*," replied Dessalines reprovingly, "it is the time for war, not women."

"Oh,—oh,—you are right, *m'cher*!" exclaimed the general, accepting the reproof good-naturedly from Dessalines of whom he was sincerely fond; the two promptly became involved in strategy.

Dessalines lunched with his general; later in the afternoon he mounted his great horse and rode slowly up the mountain. Half way to La Coupe he met Fouchère who was riding down in haste.

"*Holà*, Aristide!" called the latter, drawing rein so sharply that his pony slid for several feet upon his haunches. "Myself, I am for Port au Prince. News comes that there is prospect of fighting at Petit Goâve between the Fouchardists and the Firminists! *Peste*, this accursed turbulence! I have houses in Petit Goâve and some fool is sure to set them ablaze."

"But you are not going there?" cried Dessalines.

"No; I go to demand protection for my property from the Provisional Government. It can do no good, but may serve to reimburse me in the event of any

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destruction. I must haste. *Au revoir, camarade!* Madam is expecting you; you will of course remain until my return." With a flourish of his hat and a gash of his cruel spurs Fouchère sped on down the torrent-washed road.

Dessalines continued, disturbed in mind; he did not desire to be left alone with La Fouchère. It was evident that he attracted her. One felt her to be lawless as a forest fire; less restrained than the tempest; her soul contained neither fear nor modesty; also, she had a mind; more than he.

Fouchère he liked and respected, although there was an element about the Marabout which awakened his distrust. Yet he was his friend, and Dessalines, imitative, of strong natural decency, innate tendencies for good, was still colored by his British precepts. In the bright sunshine, decency predominated over religious scruples; as soon as the shadows began to lengthen, this decency would dwindle and his impulses would be restrained by the flaming vision of an irate God. He would scent brimstone as his passions swelled. But now, in the daylight, it was his clean British perception which prevailed; the sight of his conventional costume, riding breeches, gloves, crop, boots, all so English, did much to strengthen his good resolution.

Madam was reclining upon the veranda when he arrived. Dessalines joined her. Célèstine brought wine and biscuits; champagne, tepid and in glasses which according to Haytian custom were not overclean. In Europe, neither would have raised such a glass to the lips; in Hayti one scarcely noticed it; it stood in no relief against the smirched background.

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Madam was pensive, quiet, the quiet of the dozing cat who will prowl the night through; the air was fine but hot. She permitted Dessalines to fan her, watching him dreamily from beneath long, curving lashes. Swathed as she was in the silk kimono, each detail of a figure entirely voluptuous, was accentuated. Dessalines feared to look at her.

She said little, watching him chiefly; her smoky hair enveloping her pallid face in nebulous wisps; her many-colored eyes mere slits; bosoms aquiver with each long breath; lithe body, supple as a puma as she turned to ease her position. Dessalines forgot England; his mouth grew dry. He thought of Saint Anthony, a ridiculous legend told him in his boyhood by a Jesuit priest, but serious to him as such biblical folklore always is to a savage.

At last, to his relief, madam arose to dress for dinner. She slipped from the hammock, the kimono slid above her knees; her legs were bare, white as snow, rounded as are never the legs of negresses. Dessalines went also to dress.

At half past six Fouchère had not returned. Dessalines was troubled, but being told by his hostess that they would dine at seven, he went to the apartment placed at his disposal to change his costume. Dessalines was still dressing when La Fouchère, who was on the veranda, heard a horseman approaching the house by the road which led up the mountain from Port au Prince. A moment later a negro boy, riding the pony of Dr. Fouchère, dismounted at the gate.

"A letter for madam from M. le Docteur," he said. La Fouchère eagerly tore open the missive. It read:

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MA BELLE DÉESSE:

Business calls me in haste to Anse-à-Veau. Retain him at all costs for forty-eight hours. F.

Madam Fouchère laughed, then frowned; she had meant to detain Dessalines, but not for purposes of politics. She had confided in her husband the ambitions of Dessalines. Fouchère knew that Dessalines had sailed from New York; knew his projects in large measure; intended to employ these projects for purposes of his own. He trusted his wife; his vanity made him believe her incapable of deceiving him. He flattered himself also that she not only loved but feared him.

Madam was not long in recovering from her pique. What the game now lacked in flavor it gained in safety. Madam was an epicure; æsthetic, she was at the same time discreet; she loved life; it held much for her as it might for one of highly developed senses and the mind to use them to the limits of their capacities, and that without surfeit.

She entered the house, held the letter over one of the piano candles, saw it consumed, began to play. She was a skilled and talented musician.

"I have received word from Fouchère," she said, still glancing back at Dessalines over her bare, rounded shoulder. She ran her fingers over the keys. Madam was informal; Bohemian.

"Ah!" replied Dessalines eagerly, "he is coming?" La Fouchère, with a stab of pique, observed the eagerness of his tone. She turned and regarded him with reproach.

"Do you then so fear a *tête-à-tête* with me, my friend. I am quite harmless; I will not bite." Her white teeth

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closed with a little click which belied her words. "No; he regrets that the present unsettled condition of the country makes it imperative for him to go to Petit Goâve. He has a plantation there, and you know one expects a battle between the troops of Firmin and Fouchard. He prays that you will remain here until his return."

"He is . . . you are both most kind," replied Dessalines, "but that will be quite impossible."

"At any rate you cannot leave here to-night."

"Not conveniently; I will remain to-night with gratitude."

Dinner was served. Madam was delightful; witty, sparkling, she scintillated. Before long Dessalines' confidence had returned; he himself grew talkative. The atmosphere of conventionality, madam in a dinner gown of Paris make, perfect fitting, modest, he himself in faultless evening clothes, Jules properly assisting in the service; it was delightful.

Madam's mood of coquetry seemed passed; there were no half-veiled significances; her manner held a delightful *camaraderie*; it was thus that one should be treated by the wife of a friend. A negro, a child, and a dog have a strong sense of the fitness of things. Lack of propriety worried Dessalines, puzzled and half frightened him, placed him ill at his ease. But there was nothing of this to-night. He rested. Madam had enjoyed *her* rest in the afternoon.

They dined slowly. Madam drank perhaps a glass of wine; Dessalines took only *eau sucré* with his dinner, and a glass of *crème de menthe* at its conclusion. Madam smoked a cigarette; Dessalines did not smoke;

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he had no vices. As a boy he had essayed the use of tobacco; it had nauseated him; he never tried it again.

When they left the table madam went to the piano; she played a few pieces: "*le Cake Walk*," as the Parisians say. Dessalines was delighted; he was unable to keep his feet from shuffling.

Later they went out on the veranda. The night was very dark, very humid, heavy with perfumes; directly beneath, the depth of the valley seemed profound, elusive through the murk, canopied by a veil of haze which might have been vapor, might have been a dimness of the eyes. Up from the abyss there floated random, muffled sounds—the cry of a night bird, water murmuring with a sound which suggested subterranean cascades. Once a wail, long, eerie, inviting, floated weirdly up; it seemed a summons. Madam started and clasped both hands over her bosom: Dessalines' nostrils dilated at the sound; the skin twitched at the back of his neck; an odd gurgle arose to his throat.

There was a silence. Madam leaned toward him; her voice trembled as she spoke.

"Have you ever attended the dance, Comte Dessalines?"

His heart leaped at the query.

"The bamboula?"

"Yes; the parent of all dances."

"In my boyhood—once. It terrified me; then the priest forbade it. I never went again."

"I did not know that you were Catholic."

"I am not; I am strongly Protestant."

"Church of England?"

"No; madam. A small sect which exists only in

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one district in England. As a boy I was Catholic, but later was accidentally brought to the true faith."

"How droll! But it would interest you to see a bamboula."

"It is a sinful, pagan orgy . . . the curse of our nation."

"But do you not think it your duty as the father of your country to be acquainted with its curses in order that you may stamp them out?"

Dessalines hesitated. He had known a clergyman who informed him that he frequently visited the brothels of London for this purpose."

"Of course," pursued madam, "it is impossible that the orgy could interest you more than as a savage spectacle. Listen!"

From deep in the shadow there came a hollow, rhythmic sound; even, monotonous, varying no fraction of time.

Dessalines bristled, twitched, felt his muscles quiver; tremors, cold as ice, ran through each nerve. His heart began to pound furiously; his breath quickened; his mouth grew dry. A wolf reared among dogs might have so quivered at the distant midnight howl of one of his own kind; a tiger, reared on milk, might have so quivered at the scent of warm, fresh blood.

He recovered himself with an effort; he did not notice the agitation of madam.

"When I am in power," he said in a low voice, "I will investigate and abolish such practices."

Presently the drum ceased its beating. Dessalines breathed deeply with relief.

"You are fatigued," said madam presently. "You would like to retire?"

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"I thank you. I have been much in the sun to-day," replied Dessalines. He was aware of the utter impossibility of sleep, but he knew that the drum would later recommence. He wished to fight his fight alone; to have recourse to prayer.

"Then let us retire; I also am fatigued," said madam, and this time he caught the suppressed trembling of her voice and it seemed to set his heart on fire. Her eyes were glowing like the pit of a crucible. They rested for a moment upon his and she gave him a hand, cold as ice.

"Good night, my friend, may your dreams be such as you desire!"

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Dessalines awoke, still upon his knees. The night wind striking down from the heights smote his bare chest and he shivered with the chill. A late, yellow moon blazed luridly through his wide-opened *jalousies*.

His numbed faculties roused. Hark! . . . the drum! . . . pulsing up with insistent beat; the scent of the *stephanotis*, distilled in the sun, dissolved in the dew; he crouched quivering.

Outside his window a balcony ran the length of the house. A loose plank creaked; a thin, banded shadow flitted through his opened door, lay athwart his couch.

"*Dessalines . . . Dessalines . . . Dessalines!*" From without there came a whisper, sibilant as the hiss of a snake. He arose stealthily and stole to the casement.

Without stood La Fouchère. She was in her kimono, and the late moonlight turned her neck and arms a creamy, diaphanous yellow. She leaned on the rail, staring down into the valley.

"Ah, madam!" gasped Dessalines, "you are indis-

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creet . . . you forget that your husband is absent!" His voice had the imploring accent of a boy about to be chastised.

She raised her hand. "Listen, *mon ami!*"

"It is not well to listen," said Dessalines with a shudder.

She turned to him suddenly. "I wish to go down; to witness this thing. I cannot sleep."

"But, madam, it is not a thing for you to see!"

"Nevertheless, I wish to see it. I *am* going! Must I go alone? We can sit back in the shadows and watch; it is an exciting spectacle; to the peasants it is maddening, infuriating, but to us it will remain a spectacle. Will you accompany me?"

"I cannot permit madam to go alone—but it is a madness. What would your husband say?"

"He would be amused. He often attends; he considers it most diverting, a frolic. Once he permitted me to accompany him."

"But I implore madam——"

"Nevertheless I am going down. I will slip on a traveling cloak. Ah, look! Is it not fascinating, *mon ami!*"

The yellow moon had peered over the shoulder of the mountain and bathed the tentlike mist in a sheen of amber; it hung a golden veil, the apron of the mountain; while up from beneath came the steady beat of the drum.

La Fouchère slipped into her room to reappear in a gray traveling cloak; beneath it peeped her bare ankles and feet encased in slippers of pink brocade. She handed to Dessalines a dressing gown.

"Come," she said impatiently. He followed her

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through her own room, down the stairs and out into the soft, sensuous night. They passed swiftly and in silence down the road to the valley, then turned sharply into a path which led straight over the brow of the declivity.

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Down they went by a winding trail which wound first through the bananas, then over the brink of a slope so steep that one hardly held a footing; next into the jungle, beneath a foliage too dense to permit the passage of one errant ray of light.

Into this murk La Fouchère slipped like a fay. Her small hand clutched the wrist of Dessalines, partly in support, partly to guide his steps. For herself there was no doubt, but in the rush of his emotions Dessalines did not pause to wonder at her familiarity with the way. Twigs lashed his face; bamboo thorns ripped head and shoulders.

"Not so fast!" he gasped, but La Fouchère panting, still dragged him on. He marveled at the strength of her slim fingers.

The beat of the drum was incessant, but seemed to grow no nearer; would grow no nearer although they stood at the shoulder of him who beat it.

They crossed an open glade where the moonbeams straggled down in sickly pallor. Half way across, a thick voice boomed from the inky darkness beyond.

"Ou c'a v'aller?"

"Fouchère!" panted the woman.

"Bon!" growled the negro sentinel and slipped back into the gloom.

There were others near, for Dessalines heard a voice

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say "La belle Française," and a low, mocking laugh from some dark recess.

A light glowed upward, increasing suddenly as they approached, until it seemed as if the whole jungle were ablaze; a few steps and they had reached the edge of the amphitheater—a clearing in the forest. It seemed to Dessalines that the god of darkness here worshiped, had taken an active part in the furnishing of his tabernacle. About an open space of perhaps fifty feet in diameter there was a circle of dead and dying trees; trees girdled by cane hooks, and from the giant limbs of these which clawed against the darkening sky line like gaunt, crooked fingers, there hung funereal festoons of moss which swayed gently in the upward rush of heated air from a huge fire, roaring in the middle of the elliptic, open space.

This much Dessalines saw while yet within the shelter of the trees. He saw also that a great concourse thronged the outer edge of the amphitheater; the firelight shone redly on scores of ebony faces, glistening with sweat from the great heat. Every black recess was the nest of negro faces; their twisted limbs as they crouched uncouthly were indistinguishable from the gnarled roots of the trees.

La Fouchère stopped suddenly; her lithe body swayed to this side and that as she peered beneath the screening boughs; she turned to Dessalines and her pale face shone eerie against the surrounding black ones; she smiled with a flash of her white teeth. Her body swayed toward him.

"We will creep to the edge and sit where we can watch," she whispered. "They have not yet begun."

They worked their way quietly to the edge of the

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amphitheater; here they were visible, but of their presence none gave any sign. Dessalines, the sweat streaming into his eyes from the heat of the fire, stared about him with awed interest; the early summons, their furtive arrival, the sinister surroundings all stirred powerfully something deep within him; something of which he had always been conscious, lived in fear, dreaded to awaken. Now it quivered, seemed to stretch and expand, a genius long dormant, roused to action by the terrific heat, the unhallowed rites.

La Fouchère motioned for him to sit upon the ground; he sank into the angle formed by the spreading, buttressed roots of a great *ma-poo* tree. She dropped to his side, her body against his, her head against his great arm. They waited in silence.

At the farther end of the amphitheater he saw dimly through the flames a large, square object, apparently an altar built of logs and mud; it was chest high; upon it lay a bleeding carcass which might have been that of a goat.

They waited in silence for many minutes, and all the while from some unseen, dark corner the drum continued its even, tireless beat. The fire burned lower; the heat of the flames became supportable, its crackling less loud. No sound came from the waiting audience; one caught the flash of white eyeballs, ruby hued in the reflected light, the glistening of black, reeking faces; that was all.

"Look!" whispered La Fouchère suddenly.

Into the inclosure there had flitted a wild figure; a woman, stark naked, tall, muscular in form and with a skin as fine as black satin. She wore a necklace of

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human finger bones threaded upon a thong. Her feet were incased in colored sandals. Her hair, black and straight, was tied with wisps of colored worsted. In her hand was a long bone. She turned several times, then crouched before the altar.

"The *mama-loi*!" whispered La Fouchère. "She is the grandmother of my husband; is she not droll?"

A twig snapped; then came the rustle of moving bodies and the pat, pat of naked feet upon the hard packed earth. Into the open there emerged a file of negroes. They passed behind the altar and down the sides of the amphitheater. They were of both sexes, apparently quite young; they sat upon the ground and again there was silence.

Suddenly the priestess sprang from the ground and tapped three times upon the altar with the bone she held in her hand; then rapidly she made the circuit of the inclosure, mumbling words unintelligible to Dessalines. Having made the circuit she passed in front of the altar and uttered what seemed a sharp command. The effect was instant; the dark assemblage arose like a wave; one by one they approached the altar, were harangued by the *mama-loi*, made obeisance, and shuffled back to their places.

This ceremony was short; the worshipers were eager for the dance. Men brought a great caldron which was swung above the fire; in securing it some of the contents was spilled and it seemed to Dessalines that the fluid was sanguineous. Others brought goats which were roasted whole.

The *mama-loi* traced two circles about the fire; then stepping to a young man who had entered with the neo-

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phytes she took him by the hand and led him trembling to the circle; as he entered she handed him fetishes, bones, hair, feathers tied in little bundles, some of which articles she swung about his neck. Striking him lightly with her baton of bone she began a weird, monotonous chant to the time of the drum which had never ceased its even beat, and suddenly the entire assemblage caught up a wild inspiring chorus.

The effect upon the youth was startling; his first frenzied leap carried him from the circle, into which the *mama-loi* turned him. The song continued; the rapid motions of the man increased in time, became more extravagant, wilder, less coördinate, and at last convulsive. With a startled scream he pitched suddenly upon his face and lay writhing.

His place was taken by another of the neophytes, this time a girl; the same phenomena resulted, while moans, sobs, stifled cries seemed wrenched from the savage audience.

Against the shoulder of Dessalines, La Fouchère stirred restlessly; he heard the gasps of her rapid breathing. The dancers were now in twos and threes—groups of whirling, gyrating figures, many of whom were falling from exhaustion and were dragged by others into the jungle. Soon the neophytes had disappeared; others from the edge of the amphitheater took their places. All, as they danced, drank great draughts of the mixture in the caldron; the women tore the clothes from their bodies.

Dessalines, from the depths of his lair, had watched silently. At first the sinister scene had excited him, stirred his wild fancies, half frightened him. This sen-

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sation had been dispelled by the mummary about the altar; as an educated man it roused his contempt; as a Christian, his righteous anger. It had given him time to collect himself; to array his forces against what was to follow: the dance which had nothing to do with aught but the senses; made no appeal to the mind.

As the dance commenced he had watched in a disgusted horror which increased when the victim fell foaming to the ground. Then the girl had leaped into the ring to take his place; she was physically pleasing, her lithe movements were full of grace. He became interested; he was stirred, but sorry when she had been overcome.

Other women had danced; danced less modestly, yet with a frenzy which made their actions less obscene than startling; theirs was not lewdness; it was sexuality gone staring mad. Far more demoralizing was the brain-eroding beat of the bamboula and the frenzied clamor to which it set its flawless time. Dessalines forgot his contempt; he struggled to remember that he was a spectator; cold, dispassionate, watching from a height the writhings of worms. His muscles began to twitch, his bulging eyes to roll.

The dance progressed; beside him La Fouchère trembled spasmodically. Shocking scenes were enacted; the earth seemed to have ruptured and spewed up the denizens of hell. The drum beat on; the chorus grew hoarse, supplicating, convulsive. Dessalines' brain swam; like a drowning man all but unconscious, he fought on blindly, not knowing why he should fight. He gripped the tortuous roots beneath him until his fingers burst and the blood oozed out unheeded. He had known

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temptation many times before, the temptation of the virile human animal to slip the leash which binds it to the mental part and range untrammelled; now it was not temptation which he fought; it was the death of his soul: the soul he had so struggled to possess, to hold cleanly.

He had no idea toward what he was impelled; no thought; his longing was to let go; to leap into the circle and rave and revel and drink that bloody brew. It forced cries from his chest; he struggled against a torturing impulse to give his great voice vent in a roar of the chorus of that maddening song which seemed to shake the foundations of the swamp; set the tree roots aquiver. He was the battle ground of an unfair fight; centuries crowding decades; the outcome could only be one way.

The great fire burned lower, unheeded; the leaping flames sank, licking redly along the burned-out embers, now shooting upward to shrink again. These flaring lights painted in a flash sights at which the soul of the struggling man reached and recoiled and sprang again, eager as the yellow tongues of the panting fire; reaching for what the shadows held, recoiling from what the flames showed. The fire became merely a lurid glow; glistening shapes, heaving bodies, swam about him; the gloom of the jungle was peopled with unreal hell shapes; they represented the concentrated lust from the earth from which they had been banished. The air was thick with black passions.

Something stirred at his side—a flutter, a gasp. A white figure passed between him and the palpitating glow of the fire, lightly, with the swirl of a wisp of smoke borne on a zephyr. A low laugh trilled above the gut-

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tural sighs springing from the glistening shapes seen dimly through the gloom. Again the laugh bubbled like a spring from the side of a mossy bank—a cool, a fresh, a thirsty sound in that place of gaspings. The light of the fire was almost out, yet enough remained to touch dimly these figures, the unregenerate ones of the fanatics, the degenerate shape of the *griffone* as she danced lightly, silhouetted against the central glow.

And then as the embers cooled she seemed to fade; to slip away even as she danced and laughed, and, as she faded, the gurgling laugh suddenly changed; it carried a new note—the call of kind, and as this call pierced his straining senses the things which held him to the present snapped; he slipped back into the shadow.

CHAPTER XIX

JULES ENTERS THE VALLEY

FOR three days the orgy continued. The end of a week saw some few racked revelers still haunting the place; three nights of such terrific debauchery was the limit of the endurance of most of the participants. Daytimes they withdrew into temporary lairs; huts, hiding places; nights they drank, danced, gorged themselves with animal food; the last alone a debauch for a negro accustomed to a diet of fruit, fish, and cereals.

Jules found himself alone at the villa; Célestine had disappeared with the others. Jules guessed where they had gone; he had listened half the night to the bamboula; had heard faint, frantic cries, and smelt the wood smoke. When his master failed to return late upon the following day the little Frenchman became anxious, less alarmed for Dessalines' safety than for the result of his absence at such a time; a time when action meant all; when any moment might bring the expected summons. He wondered that the Fouchères dared leave their house thus open and deserted. He did not know that Fouchère was the grandson of a vaudoux priestess; that not the hardiest thief upon the island would have dared rest covetous eyes upon the property of the descendant of a *mama-loi*.

Late in the afternoon his anxiety overcame his prudence. He saddled his master's great horse and rode down the mountain. A man directed him to the house of

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General Miragoâne. He was absent. Though Dessalines had not observed him, he had been present at the dance.

Much troubled, Jules returned to La Coupe. The house was still deserted; shortly after his arrival the darkness fell and beneath him in the valley he heard the beat of the bamboula which he cursed heartily. He ate some food; drank a bottle of wine; lit one of Fouchère's cigars and meditated upon the situation. He had little knowledge of a vaudoux orgy. Dessalines, like all Haytiens of the better class, felt the stigma of the thing and was reticent upon the subject; Rosenthal had given him some idea of the debauch, but a wrong one. Such orgies as the Jew had witnessed were sham affairs, vulgar saturnalia free from the superstitious ritual, usually held beneath a roof and from which foreigners were not excluded. Rosenthal's account was less impressive than jocose, yet something told the Frenchman that the valley would prove an unhealthy locality for a white man.

The evening passed and he saw no one; the little hamlet was almost deserted; Jules became a prey to nervousness. He lay down in the hammock, but could not sleep. Beneath him the drum pounded on with the evenness of a pendulum.

Then he heard another sound; from far beneath came the clatter of a pony's hoofs on the hard, packed clay of the road; the sounds increased; a horseman drew up at the gate.

"Who is that?" called Jules.

"Oh, *m'cher*, is this the house of the Doctor Fouchère?"

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"Yes."

"Is Monsieur Dessalines within, *oh, oh, m'sieur?*" The man spoke in the creole *patois* with which Jules was rapidly becoming familiar. Jules walked out to the gate. The horseman, seeing that he was white, started.

"Oh, you are Maître Jules, the attendant of Monsieur le Comte?"

"*Si!*"

"There is a letter for him, monsieur. It is important; there is no answer.

Jules took the letter from the man's hand. "Who gave you this?" he asked.

"A man in Port au Prince. I brought it immediately. It is a long ride—it makes one thirsty."

"Come into the house," said Jules, "and we will have a glass of wine together. Did this other man tell you anything?"

"No; only that he could be found at the house of Lucien Laroque, opposite the market; also, he said that you would pay me."

"What is your charge?"

"I throw myself upon the generosity of m'sieur."

"Here are ten gourdes."

"*Merci, m'sieur!*"

"Here also is a glass of wine."

"*Merci plus, m'sieur!*"

Jules opened the letter. It was written in a cipher prearranged which he had committed to memory. He read, reread, then fell back, faint, dazed, overcome. With an unsteady hand he poured himself a glass of wine. The note read simply:

JULES ENTERS THE VALLEY

We are betrayed by Fouchère. Captain bribed. Ship destroyed. Strike at once or all is lost. R.

"It is bad news?" asked the man, eyeing Jules over his glass.

"It is terrible!" wailed the quick-witted Frenchman. "Monsieur le Comte will be desolated! His mistress has died in childbed!"

"Oh, oh, that is a pity! *Oh, m'cher!*" cried the messenger. "But," he added, "there are women aplenty and much alike. One cannot choose the best on a tree of ripe mangoes."

"Nevertheless, Monsieur le Comte must be notified immediately." He eyed the man doubtfully, half minded to send him down into the valley with the note. But no! He, Jules, must find him. Perhaps Monsieur le Comte was not himself—"this devil of a Madam Fouchère," he said to himself, and added, "and this he-devil, Fouchère!"

He turned to the messenger. "Do you know the house of the General Miragoâne?" he asked.

"Oh, yes; a fine man, the brave general. If a few others, I will not mention who, were more like him—" he rattled on after the manner of the garrulous Haytian of the lower class.

"My master is there!"

"Your master! Oh, oh! a *leblanc*—the servant of——"

"Be still!" snarled Jules.

"*Oui, oui, m'cher!*"

"Take this note to the general and ask him to give it to Monsieur le Comte." He duplicated the message,

though doubting that Miragoâne possessed the key to the cipher. Still, if he did not, he might get it the sooner to Dessalines.

"Here are five gourdes besides. Perhaps the general may pay you more. Now go quickly."

"*Oui, m'cher, merci, m'cher—oh, oh!*" he shambled to the gate, remounted, and rattled off into the darkness.

For several minutes after he had gone Jules remained plunged in meditation; his master's cause was to his mind as good as lost; his master's fortune as well! He walked through the house to the veranda which overhung the valley, now laden with the night. Up from the depths welled in even, unruffled cadence the tireless beat of the drum. The mist-laden darkness hung like a wet pall, a shroud, a bier cloth. Jules looked down; he shivered.

"*Peste!*" muttered the faithful fellow. He twiddled the note in his fingers. "It is *triste* below, but—but——"

He walked rapidly through the house, closing the door behind him.

"*Peste!*" he said again. "A thief could walk through the side of one of these ridiculous houses!"

He had located the path during the day; that is, he had strayed as far as the edge of the jungle. Jules shivered again but held upon his course.

He passed through the bananas, over the brink, entered the gloom. The shadows closed in about him.

These black shadows were his pall; the mist hanging from the treetops his winding sheet; the valley his tomb.

PART III
CAROLINA

CHAPTER XX

LIVE OAK PLANTATION

THE Moultrie plantation, bounded on one side by salt inlets from the sea, on the other by the great Caw Caw Swamp, is said to have been laid out in the days of the buccaneers. No one at the time of the present Moultrie's grandfather could remember when was built the first great dike which still holds the miles and miles of backwater of the closed reserve from the broad expanse of rice lands which stretch almost to the bayou. During the boyhood of Manning's grandfather huge "loblollys" rose straight from the middle of the long, low mound, and it is not probable that anyone would be so foolish as to build a dike around a growing tree.

Although the greater part of the seven thousand broad acres of the Moultrie estate stretched away toward the swamp in square after square of cultivated marsh-land, there was a great deal in timbered "high land," which, in the rice belt, means land well above the reach of swamp and tide water; ground having an elevation of perhaps ten feet above the rice dikes.

On such an eminence, surrounded by a park of venerable live oaks, stood the ancestral home of Manning Moultrie. The antiquity of the plantation house itself ranked far beneath that of its environment, the structure having been erected only a little over a hundred years.

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The "old house," so called to distinguish it from the present centenarian dwelling which was always known as the "new house," had been situated on another part of the plantation, since abandoned as a residential site, owing to its remoteness, and the higher and healthier land, which had come later into the estate as the dowry of a daughter of the Rutledge family and bride of one of the early Moultries, was chosen in its place.

Under the old régime the rice planters of South Carolina were surpassed by none in the new world in the magnificent style in which they lived. Even in the present era of extravagance it is doubtful if there is any one class that is able to enjoy the same independent ease and elegance as did these people. The peculiar conditions then extant, by which a household might live surrounded by all of the luxury which the arts of the epoch produced and enjoy the regal setting of a monarch, without his care and obligation, have passed away forever.

To these people belonged that ranking wealth which so few of our modern plutocrats can boast; their time was all their own. At any moment that might suit his inclination the planter could turn over the care of the estate to his steward, and with his wife or perhaps his entire family, depart to spend the season in London or in Paris, where he would doubtless find as many of his set as in the city of Charleston itself.

Little of this early grandeur survives the passing of the caste. Traveling to-day along the Carolina coast; winding among the bayous from Georgetown to Beaufort, one may see many sad relics of this golden era. While in threading up some little winding stream, oozing sluggishly from forest and primeval swamp, one will

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come upon the footprints of a long-forgotten occupation. Sometimes it is still possible to trace the washed-out rooty banks of ancient rice dikes and to separate from the venerable woods of pine and live oak the squarely defined blocks of second growth springing from a tangled morass once cleared and fruitful.

Here one may realize the problem that confronted the earlier settlers, and marvel at the minds that conceived the plan of redeeming those miles and miles of submerged jungle, with no other tools than the African slave and the black-snake whip!

Where the ground is higher the careful eye may discover a cluster of ancient live oaks buried under the pines. These trees take systematic order, then align, to form a broad, straight avenue, all but lost in the later growth of pines and gums.

The moss hangs low in funereal festoons; beneath, the avenue is choked with underbrush, seedlings and saplings, palmetto and scrub oaks. The vista is obscured, but here and there where the open spaces coincide one may see far through and catch a glimpse of a solitary column clothed in cypress, or the black background beneath a marble arch.

Sometimes the outlines of the ancient mansion may be traced; by rooting, as have the wild hogs, under the carpet of leaves and mold, one may unearth the long English bricks, brought by shiploads long ago from far across the western ocean. Tombs there are of men who fought against the buccaneers—perhaps, who knows, beside them!

There are many such ruins, not of a single house and of its environments, but of acres and acres of what

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was once the garden spot of North America. One views the ruins of a noble habitation with sadness; of the broad lands that nourished the inhabitants, with despair.

Strange as it may seem in this country of progress, there is probably less land in a state of cultivation in that section to-day than there was fifty years ago.

Live Oak Plantation, the home of Manning Moultrie, was one of the few rice plantations the organization and operation of which had not been thrown out of balance by the shock of the Civil War. The family fortunes were too securely rooted to be shaken by even such a cataclysm. Manning's father had simply laid down his sword to resume his operation of the broad acres, fertile as ever, but worked by paid in the place of slave labor.

The death of the master had made changes which the deaths of thousands could not. In the hands of an able and honest manager the plantation had become simply a great workshop; the old life was dead. Most of the former slaves remained, some drifted away.

Virginia had not visited Carolina since, immediately after the death of the husband and father, the widow had taken the children to Europe. This was when Virginia was ten years of age. Her recollections of the place were still accurate; of the life and customs, vague and uncertain. She had expected, of course, to be kindly received by the old friends of her family, but she was little prepared for the warmth of the reception which she found upon her arrival in Charleston during the last week in October.

Giles had reached New York late in September; he had spent a month at the Cromwell's in Manchester,

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where Manning joined them, and the three proceeded together to Carolina.

Virginia found the city charming, interesting, the kindness of the people whose names alone were familiar affected her deeply. They had spent a week in the city, as Manning knew the danger of sleeping near rice lands too early in the autumn, and was anxious to wait until a frost had rendered malarial plasmodia inert.

It was the plan to spend November on the plantation and sail for England the first week in December, in order to be at Fenwick for Christmas. The wedding of Giles and Virginia was to take place the week after New Year's.

The plantation was eighteen miles from the city. Early in the morning of the first day in November they rode out on the old Savannah turnpike, crossed the long bridge over the arm of the bay, cantered along the marshes past rice fields, now dry stubble and quite free from the nauseous reek of a few weeks before. To Virginia the ride was of absorbing interest, the refreshment of a dream; the low country with its miles of marsh and lonely desolation impressed her strangely. Now and then they would pass groups of chattering negroes who would draw aside to wish them a polite and friendly greeting as they passed.

The ride stirred her; the fresh, balmy air, sweet with the resinous, piney perfumes, summoned hosts of long-forgotten memories; she noted the quality of the sunshine, so different from that of England; in the swampy meadows flocks of snipe, plover, larks, and myriad other flute-voiced birds sent rippling choruses heavenward as they circled in search of the rice grains spilled by the

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gleaners. A rattlesnake crossed the road to coil by the edge of the ditch. Manning dismounted and fearlessly killed it with his riding whip. The incident impressed Virginia. Where the road wound along the edge of the marsh, full-grown families of summer ducks splashed noisily from the rushes and cannoned for the distant woods. Soon the road plunged into the pine forest, and for miles the shoeless hoofs of their horses fell noiselessly upon the aromatic blanket of pine straw.

As they neared the plantation gates there were signs of occupation; far to the left they heard the ringing blows of an ax and with the measured beat a full, rich voice chanting a plantation melody. In the distance an unseen driver apostrophized a team of mules. "Whoa, mewl! Min' yo'se'f dah, mewl!" To Virginia the language was foreign, unintelligible.

These mingled cadences with their sylvan setting recalled to Virginia a scene from an opera; impressed her powerfully. She began to understand why it was that a person who had once inhaled the soft scented breath of a Carolina forest would always desire to return. There was little to describe in the surroundings; everything to feel. She could see why all of Manning's descriptions had sounded so colorless, also why he was always so ready to return.

When they reached the gate Virginia was strongly moved; on either side there was a group of the plantation negroes, men and women, all in their holiday finery, all chattering and capering with joy. Although she could not understand the words there was no mistaking their welcome. Virginia put both hands to her lips and threw them an armful of kisses. Her eyes grew dim.

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Up the drive they cantered, under the giant, spreading, live oaks whose branches seemed to intertwine in loving embrace born of two centuries of comradeship. As they neared the house the hounds discovered them and a mellow, baying chorus rose in welcome.

The great house had been swept and garnished; a group of servants, among them some of the old slaves, was clustered on the steps of the broad veranda. These laughed, chattered, wept in the exuberance of delight. The younger generation had never known a mistress on the plantation; the older remembered Virginia's mother and were loud and joyful in their recognition. A very old woman rushed to Virginia as she drew rein at the house.

"Bless de Lawd! Glory be foh dis yeah day! Hit ole missis done come back! Hit Miss Ma'a'gry foh sho!" She buried her face in Virginia's skirt. The girl raised streaming eyes to her brother.

"I—I—don't understand what they say, but—but—they make me cry!" she faltered.

A fortnight passed happily on Live Oak Plantation. They rode; they hunted; they shot deer, turkey, and innumerable snipe. Neighbors dropped in for an afternoon call and spent three days. Giles was delighted with the place, the life, the people, the delicious informality. He wanted to buy a plantation and plant rice.

One day while at luncheon Manning, opening his mail, uttered an exclamation of pleasure.

"Who do you think is coming?" he asked.

"Leyden?" asked Virginia and Giles in eager chorus.

"How did you know?" queried Manning.

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"I felt it," said Virginia.

"Because he said he might go to Mexico by way of Charleston so as to see us," said Giles. "Told me so when I saw him in New York,—what?"

"When is he coming?" asked Virginia.

"His steamer's due in Charleston the day after to-morrow."

"Speaking of Leyden reminds me of Dessalines," observed Giles. "I wonder how the old chap's made out. One never sees anything much about Hayti; surprising, too, so near the States."

"The last account I saw," said Manning, whose face had slightly darkened at Giles's reference to the negro, "it appeared as if a man called Alexis Nord had the best chance; the whole thing's been the most absurd *opéra bouffe*. I haven't seen Dessalines' name mentioned."

"Perhaps he's lying low until some one does the work for him," suggested Giles.

"We will hear from him yet, you may depend upon it," replied Virginia with conviction.

"I'm not so sure," said Manning. "You can't depend upon a negro unless you are right behind him. He seems to lack something; imagination I fancy. A negro mixes his trails like a mongrel hound. He can't resist the temptation to reach for the nearest and easiest object at hand. He will follow the line of least resistance every time."

"But see how steadily Dessalines kept at his work of preparation," said Virginia. "You are biased, Manning."

"Possibly, but that was all a talking part; they are

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great at that—anything which entails words; a lot of words, manner, gestures. They make fair professional men, but did you ever hear of a negro financier? promoter? or anything else which required long foresight, patience, and hard work? I tell you they haven't got it in them!"

"They've never really had a fair chance, have they?" asked Giles.

"They've ruled their own country, Hayti, for almost a century; Leyden says it's a fine, fertile island which, properly cultivated, might supply the coffee market of the world; yet the average American, right next door, knows less of Hayti than he does of Iceland. We can't even find out what's going on there."

"But consider the French influence," began Giles defensively.

"I think an influence which laid out all of the plantations and established trade and schools and religion can't have done them much harm. Leyden tells me that in St. Marc, a port where one may see half a dozen European vessels loading coffee, cacao, cotton, dyewood, and mahogany, there isn't even a landing jetty, and that anyone wishing to go ashore must be carried through the surf by the natives. Oh, bother the negro!" concluded Manning, with his usual intolerance of the subject.

Leyden arrived in Charleston two days later. Giles drove in to meet him.

"My dear boy!" cried the naturalist, who had arrived early and was at the hotel, "I am delighted to see you! And Miss Moultrie? She is well?"

"Never better!" answered Giles heartily. "Man-

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ning, too. I say, jolly place, this,—what? Went out last Saturday and each of us got a turkey; magnificent birds, turkeys,—what?”

Leyden laughed. “They are the true American birds and far more admirable than the eagle. And so you like Carolina! I cannot blame you, considering the conditions of your visit.”

They lunched together. As they were sitting down Leyden exclaimed:

“By the way, I dislike intensely to be the bearer of bad news, but our friend Dessalines has met with serious reverses. In fact I am not sure that he is at liberty—or alive, for that matter.”

“No!” exclaimed Giles, startled. “What has happened to him?”

“I will tell you all I know. There is a curious hostelry in New York, much frequented by South Americans and West Indians. I usually call there when in town, to look up old acquaintances. There are a great many people south of the tropic in both hemispheres to whom I am under obligation, and one wishes to pay one’s debts, both good and ill. The day before sailing for Charleston I dropped in there and among others, whom should I meet but my old acquaintance, Rosenthal; a Jew, a man whose talents and qualities I respect. I know that he is courageous; I believe that he is as honest as most of us. When I saw him last, eight years ago, he was selling supplies to the Cuban Insurrectos and transporting refugees to Jamaica.

“‘And where are you from now?’ I inquired, when we had exchanged greetings.

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“ ‘From a green corner of hell called Hayti,’ he answered with a grin, ‘where I have just failed in an attempt to place an acquaintance of yours in power.’

“ ‘Dessalines?’ I asked.

“ ‘Yes; it was a wretched business! Deliver me from meddling again with the politics of the simple African! One might as well attempt to found a dynasty of children. You know Dessalines well?’

“ ‘As well as was necessary to understand him,’ I answered.

“ ‘And what was your understanding?’

“ ‘Simply that like most negroes who are honest and of good principles his nature was something between that of a little child and a good dog.’

“ ‘He had other qualities—but no matter! He wished to be emperor of Hayti. He had plenty of money and with that, little else is needed to rule Hayti; but the dear Comte was lacking in the little else—discretion. I mustered him a following at no small personal risk; then I bought him a steamer and equipped her for a campaign. Dessalines spent his time praying and paying the bills. But that was not all. You know the Fouchères?’

“ ‘Yes; too well.’

“ ‘The one necessitates the other. If Dessalines had told me that he had made a confidante of La Fouchère I could have saved him a great deal of money. Did you ever meet a Captain Oliver?’

“ ‘I do not recall him.’

“ ‘You are to be congratulated. Mallock, you know Mallock?’ I nodded, ‘secured him to take command of our vessel. We landed Dessalines at St. Marc, whence

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he was to proceed overland to Port au Prince to see to the muster of his troops at that place and march on the capital at a word from me. I was to collect and arm the rest of our army, the recruits for which were at several different points. In the meantime Dessalines was the guest of the Fouchères.'

"'At La Coupe?'

"'At La Coupe. There madam must have wormed out the balance of his plans. Fouchère was secretly a Firminist. He came belly to earth to Petit Goâve, where he bribed our captain to take the ship to Gonaïves and deliver her to Jean Jumeau.'

"'And you?'

"'When I awoke I was under guard in my room. As yet we had taken no troops aboard. I had previously prepared for treachery, however, and had run wires from my room to a keg of gunpowder laid against the garboard strake on the port quarter. My room, you see, was on the starboard bow; on deck. Ha! ha!'

"'I admire you,' said I; 'go on.'

"'When I saw that we were not too far from shore I pressed a button! Of course they had not wit enough to accredit it to me. It was *sauve qui peut*. She sank in twenty minutes, in thirty fathoms. When the others were gone—there were plenty of boats, for you see we had planned to land troops at Port au Prince—I lowered one of them and ventured forth alone. The Dutch steamer picked me up next day on her way into Port au Prince northward bound. I managed to send a message to Dessalines. Perhaps it never reached him; I have not heard from him since. A good man, Dessalines, but lacking the qualities of a king!' and that,

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Giles," concluded Dr. Leyden, "is all that there was to be learned from my acquaintance, Rosenthal."

"What a wretched *fiasco*!" exclaimed Giles.

"It is a country, a people, a race of absurdities. I hope that our friend has not got himself into trouble. And now tell me of your plans."

In a few words Giles told him. "*You* are going to Mexico?" he asked.

"Yes, I have a commission to dig up a little Aztec rubbishery. But first I must go to Florida, as I have another commission to pass an expert opinion on a bonanza orange grove. You had better go down with me; you can make the trip in three days."

"Right!" exclaimed Giles. "It does seem a shame to be so near and not see the place. Believe I'll go with you if Virginia and Manning will let me. Besides I've always rather fancied the idea of having an orange grove myself and it might not be a bad plan to look it over."

"No," said Leyden meditatively, "not as long as you are with me. Don't try it alone, however; it is a very popular English vice, buying orange groves. However, if you insist I fancy you can buy the one I am going to inspect at a very low rate when I've finished. I have strong views on orange plantations."

"Ever been bitten?"

"No; but I have dressed the wounds of others. Well—I am impatient to be off, if you are not."

Giles ordered his buckboard and a few minutes later, behind one of Manning's Kentuckians, they were rapidly leaving the city.

Halfway to the plantation they traversed a district known as "Red Top," a place of bad repute by virtue

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of the congregation there of the rice-field laborers, a class of negroes lower than those found in the cotton lands, many of the latter of whom were unable to live in the rice belt owing to the fever. It is possible that these rice-field negroes were originally brought from the fever coast and were the nearest that could be got to malarial immunes; as a matter of fact many always have and no doubt always will die of the fever.

Suddenly Leyden raised his hand warningly. "Listen! ah, dogs,—and riders!"

Giles reined in and listened. "I do not hear anything," he observed.

"Nor I, this moment . . . there! Did you not hear it when the wind freshened?"

Giles shook his head. "I can't say that I did. Hello, there's a bell!"

Leyden laughed. "Or a bloodhound," he added. "Not a pleasant sound in this country and tinged with unhallowed memories. They are coming this way. Let us drive on."

Again, this time above the gritting of their wheels through the deep sand, there boomed out a deep, knell-like note. The sound was new to Giles; the bay of a foxhound was music in his ears. This also was music, but of a sort which made the hair bristle at the nape of his neck. Their horse pricked up his ears and snorted.

"They are not on the road," said Leyden, "they are going through the woods; let us wait. Perhaps you had better stand by the horse's head; he seems inclined to turn and bolt."

Giles stepped down and took the animal by the bridle.

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The horse stood quietly, but his neck began to sweat, despite the coolness of the air ; his flanks quivered.

Again the deep-throated bay tolled through the piney woods. A ringing yell followed it; a wicked sound; the rebel yell. A moment later there came the thud of many hoofs on the soft turf and a troop of horsemen broke into the road. They were a savage group; tall, lean, saddle colored, with fierce, cruel eyes, drooping mustaches, and goatees. Some were full bearded, some smooth shaven; all savage, felt hatted, booted, spurred upon one heel, and carrying rifles, not slung as do the cowboys, but loose in the hand, resting on the saddle bow. The leader held in leash a single huge bloodhound.

As he struck the highway the hound paused and with wrinkled brow studied the mixed trails. He swung his great head, drooping eyes troubled, seeking to cast about for the lost trail, but the leash held him. The riders were examining Giles and Leyden. Strangers in that section were a curiosity.

"Evenin'," observed the leader. He was younger than the others, less ragged.

"Good evening," replied Dr. Leyden.

"Y' all ain't seen a loose nigger 'long the road?"

"No," replied Leyden, and Giles glancing at him was surprised to see him draw out a cigar, light it slowly, and drop the match, still burning, into the dry grass beside the road. He knew that Leyden never smoked at that time of day.

"What do you want the negro for?" asked Leyden, taking a puff of his cigar.

The men regarded him suspiciously. "What we allers want niggers for," snarled the leader half defiantly.

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"Wait a moment, friends." Leyden stepped from the wagon, drew out his kit bag, opened it——

"Look out, stranger!" called one of the "crackers," "y' all done set the grass afire!"

"Ah, so I did," said Leyden indifferently. He drew a bottle of whisky from his kit bag. Giles watched him wondering.

"My friend and I were just about to have a drink," observed Leyden. "You gentlemen look heated; won't you join us?" he advanced toward them, bottle in hand, a smile on his handsome face which would have beguiled St. Peter.

The mounted men looked puzzled—still, whisky was whisky. The leader looked yearningly at the bottle, hesitated, spat out his tobacco, and wiped his lips with the back of his hand.

"Seein' as you're so perlite," he began, when one of the others observed:

"Say, brother, this yere blaze is spreadin' right smart. Fust thing you know the hull woods 'll be afire."

"I believe you're right," said Leyden. "Here, my friend," he handed the bottle to the leader, retraced his steps, and proceeded to tread out the growing conflagration while Giles led the horse forward. Meantime the bottle passed from hand to hand. Leyden retraced his steps, still stamping out the flickering flames which had burned almost to the feet of the cavalcade.

"That's the right stuff!" observed the leader with a smack of his thin, cruel lips. "Boys, I reck'n we'd best be gettin' on."

"What's your nigger done?" asked Leyden.

"Same ole story . . . white woman! We'll git 'im

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... wus'n that, he done tore up a pair o' my best dawgs."

"What!"

"Tew o' my dawgs come up on 'im an' he jes' natchully tore 'em to pieces! Man dear, he jes' made a swipe an' ripped 'em to pieces with his naked han's. He shore mus' be a honey!"

"Do you know who he is?"

"Not sartinly, but there was a big buck nigger seen on this yeah turnpike yesterday pintin' out fer Savannah. We seen his tracks back yonder by the branch and they shore were mons'trous. Come on, boys. Evenin', stranger; thank'ee kindly. *Yip—yip—hoo-ee!*"

The dog studied the ground earnestly, turned this way and that, worked toward the burnt patch, began to circle. For several minutes he moved slowly about, while Leyden and Giles watched. He reached the other side of the spot where Leyden had burned the grass; sniffed hungrily, then raised his grand head and gave voice to a deep and glorious bay.

"*Wh-hoop-ee—ya-ya—yoo-ee—yip-yip!*" shouted the men. The leader turned to Leyden and waved his arm.

"He's on!—that 'ere burned spot bothered 'im some. So long!"

"As I intended that it should," muttered Leyden.

"You knew that the man had passed that way?" gasped Giles.

"Certainly," snapped Leyden, for once curt with his favorite. "There were his tracks, large as life; almost large enough, in fact, to have been made by our unfortunate friend—Dessalines."

CHAPTER XXI

THE CAW CAW SWAMP

THAT night after Virginia had retired, Giles brought up the incident of the homeward drive.

"I wonder if they caught that poor beggar. My word, they *were* harrying him! Who would ever believe that such things could happen in a great enlightened country like the States? Not that it's so very civilized, though—" he concluded, with a *naïveté* which made the other two men smile.

"You may be assured they caught somebody," said Manning. "They don't often come back empty handed from those expeditions. If they find out afterwards that they have lynched the wrong man they are usually sportsmanlike enough to admit that the joke is on *them*!"

"No!—really?" cried Giles. "It isn't as bad as that! Do they often get the wrong man?"

"It has been known to occur," answered Manning, dryly. His voice altered, became hard. "Such ideas of justice are the only remedy this country has, Giles." He turned sharply to Leyden. "Is it not so, Dr. Leyden?"

"Lynchings and the like are consistent and no doubt very satisfactory forms of revenge," said Leyden. "But I fail to see where the remedy comes in."

"Why do you say that?" asked Manning sharply.

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"If you knew what it was to live under the constant fear of these terrible atrocities; to be a poor farmer, we will say, like one of the men you met, and to come home with your ax over your shoulder and find your cabin the scene of a ghastly and revolting tragedy . . . !" He looked expectantly at the naturalist.

"I can understand the blood rage of the father and husband," replied Leyden quietly. "I was simply questioning the remedy, the, to me, mistaken casuistry which makes it appear such."

"Why mistaken? Can you suggest a better? Anything possible—effective, yet humane?"

"Possibly not; that is scarcely the question, which is whether the present course is a remedy at all. Do you know that, from my knowledge of the fanciful, morbid, perverse elements of the negroid mentality, I firmly believe that each spectacular lynching of a negro for a crime of this sort is the direct cause of others of similar character. There is no human brain upon which suggestion acts so strongly, so imperatively, as upon his."

"But where does the suggestion come in when a negro is lynched—burned, we will say, for some atrocity?"

"In the most powerful way; by exciting his sense of the morbid, the horrible. For instance, a negro commits an atrocity; he is hounded, caught, carried by a howling mob to some dreary spot and there tortured, finally killed, annihilated, remnants of his carcass being carried off by ghouls worse than the madman, because they are not themselves mad. Other negroes are naturally terrified; they hear the thing related, discuss it with quickened breath and rolling eyes. Upon one

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less mentally stable than the others it makes a profound impression; he broods upon it, dreams of it, is haunted . . . until some day the opportunity occurs and because the image of this thing is greater in his lop-sided brain than his sense of logic he rushes blindly on and does this thing, and is in turn taken, burned, and made material for other madmen to work on. It works the same in other natures where perhaps the deranged impulse is instead homicide or pyromania; runs in epidemics, as do all crankisms, bomb throwing, and the like. If the man could be taken quietly and killed without any sensation there would be far less of this sort of thing, to my mind."

"I will not attempt to argue with you, doctor," answered Manning wearily. "I have heard somewhat similar views advanced. Perhaps you are right."

Leyden, regretting the discussion, for he was aware of Manning's distaste of the topic, quickly and tactfully changed the conversation.

The following morning Manning took Leyden to inspect the rice fields. As they were walking their horses along the top of one of the huge dikes which held back the vast cypress-studded expanse of water in the closed reserve, they came upon a white man sitting upon the rim of the main trunk. His rifle lay across his knee. Manning glanced at him sharply, decided that he was awaiting a shot at one of the wild, unmarked hogs which wreaked such havoc with the dikes, and was about to pass on with a brief greeting, when Leyden paused. He had recognized the man as one of the band of the day before.

"Did you catch your negro?" he asked. The man grinned sheepishly.

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"No, *sir*! we never did come up on 'im—" He nodded toward the swamp. "He's in yander."

"Do you expect him to come out while you are sitting here?" asked Manning.

"There ain't many places where he *kin* come aout, and we got men watchin' *them*. We'll git 'im!"

Manning and Leyden passed on with no further comment. The "cracker" drew out a piece of tobacco, gnawed off a corner, and continued to watch.

Leyden remained for three days upon the plantation and then left for Florida, promising to return before proceeding to Mexico. At the last moment Giles decided not to accompany him, but compromised by driving him into Charleston.

Virginia, finding herself alone, for Manning had ridden off to look at a tract of timber, decided to take a walk. It was a delightful day in the middle of November; the air was soft but fine, inviting exercise. Having been repeatedly forbidden by Manning to go out of call of the plantation house, Virginia eased her conscience by taking with her a large Danish boarhound, an animal meek in disposition, and not cursed with an undue amount of courage, but of formidable aspect and much feared by the plantation negroes. She carried also in the pocket of her jacket a small pistol, in the use of which Giles had instructed her. It was one of the deadly little modern arms which will fire nine times without further effort than repeated pressures of the trigger.

Virginia was not timid, but when confronted with danger she was impulsive, erratic, apt to lose her head. Her nature was one of those ever ready to run a risk,

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but insufficient to face the danger with coolness when it arrives.

She slipped unseen from the rear of the house, crossed the park of live oaks, skirted the edge of a meadow where a herd of mules was grazing, and came out finally upon the main canal. This waterway was the great feeder, the aorta of the wonderful vascular system which supplied the rice fields which stretched away as far as the eye could reach. The canal was a small river; some boats were moored to the bank and the presence of these suggested to Virginia that it would be rather nice to row. It was a quarter of a mile to the next trunk; there the canal skirted a strip of piney woods, "high land," as it was locally called. Ten feet above the level of the marsh constitutes high land in the rice belt.

Virginia loosed the boat and picked up the oars, laughing to herself at the awkwardness of the whole craft; nevertheless she pulled easily along the bank and reached the other end breathless and glowing, her supple young muscles throbbing from the weight of the clumsy oars. Eric, her dog, had ambled along the bank whimpering his disapproval of the irregular proceeding.

Virginia had never visited this especial spot and decided to explore. She climbed the bank, reached the shelter of the trees, and then cried out with pleasure at the view. Even from that slight elevation her line of vision was much extended, and as she gazed out across the vast tract of rice lands, interspersed with patches of wooded "high land" her heart swelled with the pride of possession. The thought that all, as far as she could see, belonged to Manning and herself; the great granaries which it filled, the thousands which it fed, the revenues,

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the organization by which its great wheels were made to turn—all brought the color to her cheeks, quickened her breathing.

For many minutes Virginia stood, deep in these reflections. Had she been less abstracted she might have noticed the canine symptoms of disquiet proceeding from the hound crouched at her feet.

A deep growl called back her straying fancies; a roar from the dog as he sprang bristling to his feet startled the girl to the point of syncope and, turning in terror, she saw a strange and savage spectacle.

Behind her stood a colossus, a black; half naked, bare of head and feet. His eyes were bloodshot, bulging, and rolled toward her wildly. Such clothes as he wore hung from him in rags, the arms bare; behind him was a background of lustrous holly.

He stared at her in a wild-eyed silence. For a full moment Virginia was held rigid, fascinated as a bird who raises its head above the rim of the nest to find it almost touching the cold nose of a snake. She could not move; could not scream; caught her breath with an effort. The dog had sprung away, cowardly, bristling, snarling, but fearing to defend its mistress.

Some quality in the sinister figure called back Virginia's panic-fled senses. She looked, seemingly, understandingly, and the wonder of the thing struck away her palsy of fear.

"*Dessalines!*" she gasped. "*Dessalines!*"

The great head fell slightly forward, the thick fingers twitched; she saw the thick lips move spasmodically.

"*Dessalines!*" repeated Virginia, more loudly this time.

The great head seemed to hang from the massive shoulders by the thick-thewed neck. He did not answer. Virginia examined him closely; her wonder gave way to pity. She saw on his bare limbs new wounds, some healed, some not. Where the skin was not actually rent it was a mass of scratches; also he was emaciated; there was no rotundity to the bony prominences; these stood out broad and square and angular, and where the great muscles crossed or ran parallel, they left deep sulci between; the muscles themselves stood out clear and sharp, distinct in outline even as they hung at rest.

A wave of compassion rushed over Virginia. Leyden had told her that Dessalines had failed in his purpose; she had never dreamed that his failure could come to this. She thought of him as she had seen him last, rich, honored, a celebrity, enjoying the best which the world had to give; proud, confident, ambitious; assured of a triumph, a crown. Her eyes dimmed as they rested upon him. Her warm heart poured out a tide of pity.

Still Dessalines did not look up; the dog ceased its snarling and slunk away. Tears fell from the negro's face, splashed upon the huge bare feet; his sobs shook his wasted frame, but still he did not speak.

"Dessalines," said Virginia softly, "my poor friend——"

The sobs ceased, the deep chest filled, the great voice rumbled up. He slowly raised his head and the tears welled into the girl's eyes at the utter hopelessness of the black face.

"I have lost my soul!" said Dessalines. The crushing weight of eternal doom rested upon the honest, negro features.

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"No," answered Virginia gently; "you have lost your courage. I heard that you had failed, and was sorry; but I did not think that it could be . . . as bad as this."

Dessalines groaned; his sobbings became more audible.

"You shall come with me to the house, Count Dessalines," said Virginia firmly. "You shall be our guest—you are still our friend."

"No!" The negro raised his great hand. "I am not fit to go under your roof. I am a negro, a creature of inferior race; the same God does not love us both; our souls have their separate heavens—and *hells*!"

"You have suffered, Count Dessalines," said Virginia in the tone one would use to a grieving child. "I heard that you were betrayed by one who you thought was your friend. How he——"

"I betrayed him."

"That I do not believe, but it makes no difference; you are in trouble and you once saved Giles's life and mine. You must let us help you now."

Dessalines wept silently, hopelessly, like a child by the corpse of its mother. "Poor Dessalines," he whimpered, "poor, poor Dessalines!" He dropped upon his haunches, hid his face in his great hands, rocked to and fro in an agony of weeping; while Virginia, overcome with pity, felt the tears coursing down her cheeks. "Poor Dessalines," said he, "poor Dessalines."

Virginia grew firm. "When did you last eat?" she asked.

Dessalines looked up vacantly. "Eat? Oh, oh, . . . not for . . . days. It is a long time since I have

eaten, . . . except the little things which I have found in the swamp . . . in the woods. Yes, I would like to eat! I am very hungry, . . . but not so much as at first. Poor Dessalines is hungry!" He began to sob, and the great emaciated frame of his body was shaken.

"Come," said Virginia. "This will not do, Count Dessalines. You must have courage; come now to the house with me." She paused, startled at his sudden expression of terror.

"No, no, no! They would see me! They would kill me!"

"Nonsense," said Virginia sharply. She thought that his suffering, his famine, had made him light-headed. "Who wishes to kill you?"

"The men on horseback; they have shot at me many times. Look there!" He stepped to the girl's side and pointed across the rice fields to where, half a mile away, the main dike skirted the edge of the Caw Caw Swamp. "Do you see that single tree? follow this canal; it is where it stops. That is the only place within a mile where a man can leave the swamp; where the rattoons spring far enough apart to make it possible to shove a *bateau* between. The water is deeper than one's head. There are other places like that and there is a man with a rifle watching for me at each. Perhaps you can see that black speck; that is a man!" His intelligence seemed to return; to take strength in the protecting atmosphere of Virginia.

"But—but why do they wish to kill you?" she asked.

"They think that I am another man; I will tell you the whole story." He began to mumble the words again; Virginia with difficulty followed his speech. "After I

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failed in Hayti I was without friends, without money; if I had been found they would have killed me. A woman set them after me, but I escaped. I got to Curaçoa and from there I worked my way to Pensacola on a schooner; then I came here. I was in prison in Alabama and with a gang of convicts, but I threw the guard down the bank of the railroad and got away . . . and they hunted me, but I came here. I knew that you were my friend and I thought that perhaps you would help me . . . give me some money to get away! . . .” There was no break in the monotony of the mumbling voice. “I thought that perhaps Giles would take me to England. I am very strong and I understand horses; I could work in the stables. All of my money is gone and I am just a poor negro whom everybody wants to kill.” Sobs strangled the words. “God hates me; I cannot pray—” He mumbled, squatting; hid his face in his hands. His moaning voice continued through the thick fingers.

Virginia saw in him the great, cowering, broken-spirited animal; this knowledge, his helplessness, gave her strength, resource. Mistress, bound to protect her whimpering slave.

“Tell me the rest,” she said, “and then I will decide what is best for you.”

His hands dropped, bent knuckles on the ground. He glanced up under his furrowed brows, a look of hope in his gaunt face.

“You will help me?” he mumbled. He took up his narrative. “When I was not far from here I met a negro; he was running and crying and covered with blood; he seemed mad. His feet were cut and he carried an ax.

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When he saw me he begged me to give him my shoes for his ax. He said that he had killed a hog belonging to a white and that if he was caught he would be killed. He said that he could hardly walk because of his cut feet. I did not want his ax, but I knew enough of these low whites to know that they would kill him for stealing a hog, so I gave him my shoes." Dessalines paused and gazed about wildly.

"And then?"

"Then I went on . . . and soon I heard bloodhounds baying; first I thought they were after this other man, but I soon found that they were after me."

"Ah!"

"Yes; he had put on my shoes; I was barefooted and for a short distance I walked in his tracks; then on the edge of the woods two of the dogs overtook me—great mongrel brutes. One was behind the other, and as they came up the first sprang, but I caught him in my hands—" The bloodshot eyes grew lurid, the white teeth gleamed. "I beat his head against a tree. The second had already buried his fangs in my shoulder . . . here." He turned back a rent in the ragged shirt and showed wounds before which Virginia recoiled. "I tore him off, and in my pain ripped him to pieces. I was mad . . . crazed, and then the men came up and shot at me from a distance, but I escaped into the woods. They had another hound on a leash; I crossed the rice fields and ran along the dike . . . over there, and soon I found a *bateau* tied to the bank. Then I paddled into the swamp. . . ." He began to mumble again. "They did not think that I could get out, but I discovered them, and last night swam and climbed and waded for nearly

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a mile and came out at a different place . . . that is all. Do you think that Giles will help me? Don't tell your brother."

Virginia reflected; emotion gave way before the need of action.

"It is better that you remain here until after dark," she said presently, "then you shall come to the house and we will take care of you and see that you get safely back to England. I shall return now; I shall send you a basket of food by a man whom I can trust and as soon as my brother returns I will see that he has you brought——"

"*Hands up, niggeh!*" rasped a harsh, metallic voice. "Step one side, please, ma'am!"

There were four of them. They had trailed their quarry with a dog, a cur possessed of scent and some random corpuscles of hound blood; a dog used for the hunting of the small local deer and trained for this purpose to course silently. The trail was taken at a spot on the soft bank of the canal where one of the stealthy watchers had found the print of the big, naked foot.

These men were of a low type; they were the descendants of the refuse and sweepings of British manufacturing towns, brought to colonize districts where no man would live. From such spring the "crackers," "sandhillers," "poor whites," or "white trash," as the negroes correctly designate them. Where these have been transplanted to better soil, there has been some regeneration; one sees this among the mountaineers of the Cumberland and other ranges. Where nature has grudgingly supported them they have only continued to exist—ignorant, cowardly, savage, cruel; hospitable, it is true,

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where their regard is earned, but there are few classes of savages who are not hospitable until this curiosity is satisfied. Such hospitality is no more than a barter of food and shelter for diversion.

Virginia, glancing quickly about, saw that they were surrounded. Savage, scowling, each looking to the other for his cue, the four men crouched, rifles ready, their small, cruel eyes glinting beneath their long, unkempt hair. Undecided whether to kill or capture, to advance or retreat, they were like four snarling curs about a great black boar.

Dessalines crouched whimpering at the feet of Virginia; he plucked at her skirt, his gaunt face twitching with terror. It was this frightened, childish act, this plucking at her skirt, which awakened in her the old feudal spirit transmitted through generations of lordly ancestors. She stood upon her own broad domain which had never belonged to any other than a Moultrie; at her feet crouched one seeking sanctuary; an outcast, a fugitive. A wave of sovereign authority swept through her, thrilling each nerve; exhilarating in its righteous strength. It drew her regal figure to its full height, lit fires in her golden-hued eyes, infused her voice with an imperative ring. All fear left her.

"You cannot have this man," she said to the one nearest her. He has done no harm; he has come to me for protection and he shall have it. You may as well go." She laid her hand upon the great shoulder.

The four gaped. Theirs was the silence of utter incomprehension. Virginia felt her anger mounting. These men were obviously low in the human scale; they were peasants; their sullen silence angered her.

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"Will you go!" she commanded fiercely. "You are on my land; I do not want you here. Go! Do you hear me?"

One man stirred; one stared with wide eyes and gaping mouth; the others glanced at one another and grinned.

"Reckin this yeah's Major Moultrie's land," ventured one, "but hit don't make no diffe'unce. We want that niggeh, ma'am, and we shore are goin' to have him."

"You are *not* going to have him!" retorted Virginia. "You are talking to Miss Moultrie. If you think that you have any claim to this man you may go to my brother, Mr. Moultrie; but *now—go!*"

The faces of the men stiffened; one moved the rifle restlessly in his hands. Virginia caught the motion and it reminded her that she too was armed. She thrust her hand into her pocket and drew out the deadly little pistol.

"I will shoot the first man who tries to harm this negro!" she said, and at the words she felt Dessalines stir, move, partly rise.

"Put up your pistol, ma'am," said one of the "crackers" roughly. "Y' all ain't no call to interfere. This yeah is our business . . . do y' all know what for we want this big niggeh?"

"I do not know and I do not care!" answered Virginia. "You cannot have him, do you understand? I tell you to go!" To emphasize her command she waved them from her with the hand which held the weapon.

There was a sharp report; the man, not twenty feet from her, slightly staggered; the high-power bullet from the pistol had mushroomed against the barrel of the rifle;

the impact sent the man reeling backward; the rifle flew from him.

His companions, startled, fell back a pace and it was at this moment that Dessalines, trapped animal that he was, saw his opening for escape. Straight from the feet of Virginia he sprang, struck; sprang again like a black panther, and like the great cat he fell upon his prey. Before the terrified man could recover himself the negro's great paw was upon his throat.

Right from his feet he swung the screaming man as one might swing up a sack of corn; up he swung him, and with a circular twist of one great arm threw him across his shoulder, and as the writhing body went backward, suspended alone from that single strangling grip, those listening heard a muffled click; such a noise as might be made by a snapping twig, but duller—and the writhing ceased.

Before one could interfere or a shot be fired Dessalines, his body shielded in part by that of his victim, had dashed down the bank, out upon the dike, and so to the swamp beyond.

When he had disappeared Virginia turned. The men had gone; she was quite alone. The sun was setting; shadows were creeping over the Caw Caw Swamp.

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The drab, flat line drawn by the stagnant water upon the cypress boles, marked the point of separation between life and death. Strangely the death was all above it, the life beneath; weird, monstrous, slimy, unknown forms of life; the life that is born of death, for the existence of which death is the primary necessity; the life of the reek and ooze which belongs itself to an age long dead.

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Above there were only silence and shadow, the throbbing silence of a cypress swamp. Over the flat, stale, stinking water, sanious from rotting leaves, there hung a luminous glow. It was not light, for light illumines objects near; this was simply the absence of darkness; it illumined only itself; the phosphine, *fue-follet*, the stuff which ghosts are made of, more repellent than the umbra the terrors of which are negative. At intervals, it concentrates in definite shape, becoming luminous and glowing in a sickly, lambent flame.

Noises there are in the swamp, having their source for the most part in the lower element of living deadness, and transmitted echoless beneath the miasmatic blanket shrouding the cypress tops; also, there come noises from above, noises droning, homophonous; doubtful noises like those emanating from the fever-stricken brain and seem now within, now without.

Light is shorter than shadow; death longer than life. A gnat lives in the sunshine and lives but a day; the worm lives in the mold and lives long. The lower the type of life the more tenacious it becomes of the little spark it holds.

The life of the swamp is so diluted with death that the line of demarcation is indistinct. The day is mostly night; the light is mixed with darkness; the heat carries a chill; motion is almost inert. Under the flat, green slime which hangs like a veil to screen the Present from the Past, lurk creatures of a properly forgotten age: baleful-eyed *sauria*, *reptilia*, *ophidia*, *amphibia*, zoölogic relics of a long-dead era, cold-blooded monsters of slug-gish pulse, in the organism of which life and death so synchronously exist that at times they merge; cancerous

animal growths, surviving their proper periods of evolution into higher types and flourishing exotically under conditions for which the hand of Nature never formed them.

A swamp like this is an hereditary ulcer on the face of the earth. A foul life beneath, forms a protective crust; shields it from a wholesome cleansing. It is to be treated as other infected wounds: opened, aerated, drained. Where this occurs, the malignant growth gives way to fresher, purer organisms, creatures of the epoch which constantly improve. If life were retrogressive the earth would have disappeared before the creation thereof.

Primitive creatures assume the aspect of environment; the mimicry of Nature. It is safer to merge than to contrast; also easier, and life is economic. A dark, somber shape which was forcing its way through the cypress swamp stood thus in no relief against the background. Under the misty arches of the emaciated trees with their ragged, moldy shrouds of moss, and through the fetid element which bathed the sinuous roots, this object hauled on its course. Toiling in and out, now backward to avoid the treacherous rattoons, now rapidly ahead, pawing slimy columns upholding the vague canopy above, toiled this dark, shapeless creature which seemed born of the blackness beneath. The water displaced in its passage gave way sullenly and without an undulation. The dead protested at this trespass of the living.

Gliding, sinister shapes coiled about the long lianas, slipped without a ripple into the ooze. Pale, diaphanous eyes, narrow and long, rose noiselessly from the slime to stare at the intruder. Behind, some raucous voice

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wailed hollow with amorphous tone and lost itself between the empty aisles.

Pawing, pushing, clutching slippery trunks, hanging boughs, torn on scapheus thorn trees, scooping at the heavy water which never splashed, the object emerged into an open space; the black wall of the cypress swamp was all about. Above the canopy of ambient mist, in the world of light and motion, there was a moon which gave a background to the gaunt, fantastic treetops with their masses of mistletoe. A faint draught of air, humid, foul, stirred the murky atmosphere.

In the pale opacity of the open space, the object gathered form and outline; the form of a negro of uncouth proportions forcing through the stagnant water a *bateau* of primitive design. He knelt in the stern; his massive shoulders heaved as the long arms swept the paddle in a silent powerful stroke or reached for a handful of floating moss. He forced the cumbersome craft in and out through the open water.

In front of him there lay a shapeless mass.

As they emerged from the shadow the anæmic moonlight was reflected wanly from the contours of this shapeless thing; it brought out in turn a sharply flexed knee, a glistening shoulder, a row of teeth, opalescent eyeballs.

From the edge of the swamp there came the wailing cry of a whip-poor-will. The droning breath of insect orchestra rose higher and higher in a humming diapason. Undefined noises welled from far beneath the bottom of the marsh. There came whisperings, sobbings, husky-throated breathings, stifled groans; sounds coming not from man nor beast, air nor water; they were the subtle

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intonations of the myriad revolutions of Nature's mechanisms; the breathings, metabolism, bodily functions of the very earth.

In the swamp one finds islands; islands floating in this sea of trees. It was at one of these that the *bateau* grounded; gave up its burden.

A crimson glow painted the tent of mist pitched from the treetops; beneath, the shadow gave out sounds at which the swamp held its breath to listen. There were words, gutterings; sounds to awake old memories; to recall the dim, red dawn.

CHAPTER XXII

PERSECUTED BUT NOT FORSAKEN

MANNING and Giles listened with tense faces as Virginia, with wild eyes and feverish speech, told her amazing story. Then Manning, the cold, the self-contained, less emotional than a Sioux Indian, reached out and pressed his sister's hand.

"I am proud of my little sister," he said.

Giles said little in words; he was not good at saying things; his eyes, as they rested upon Virginia, spoke sufficiently.

"Oh, Manning!" cried Virginia breathlessly. "Do you think that I shot that man . . . killed him?"

"No, sister," answered Manning slowly, "but if Des-salines is mad, as you seem to think that he is, I would not give much for his life. Don't think about it, dear. It was an accidental act of yours and if you had shot him purposely you would have been quite justified. You are mistress here."

"Serve him right, the skulker!" said Giles savagely.

Manning was silent for several moments. "The whole countryside will be hunting your Haytian to-morrow," he said. "A regiment of soldiers would be needed to protect him now—that is, if he were first to fall into the hands of the crackers." He pondered.

"But you will try to save him, Manning, will you not?" begged Virginia.

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Manning's light eyes grew paler. "Of course I will." His voice was coldly curt. "The man saved your life and Giles's. I shall try to pay the obligation in full by saving him first from the mob and then from the law, if necessary, as seems probable. If I can only get him here, in this house he shall have sanctuary. I do not care to be under obligation to a negro."

"Manning!" cried Virginia.

"Why not take a boat and go into the swamp ourselves," said Giles. "He would recognize us. We might smuggle him out after dark."

Manning shook his head. "It might be done, but I doubt it. In his condition he would probably run from us before he knew who we were."

"Do you suppose they will hunt for him in the swamp?" asked Virginia.

"I think not. The canoe which he found is the only boat there, and I shall have ours hid. I doubt also if those men would care to go into the Caw Caw Swamp. It is a terrible place to get through; absolutely impenetrable in parts, and it would require a very good woodsman to find his way out again."

"Then you think that they will simply wait at the outlets?"

"Yes; and shoot him as they would a buck when he breaks cover. He cannot get through at night; it is bad enough in the daytime." Manning shook his head slowly. "I should not be surprised if he were never to be seen again."

"I don't agree with you, Manning," Virginia answered. "I believe that he can find his way about just as a dog might. He told me that he came out last night,

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swimming and climbing, and struck the very spot he was looking for. Think of how many generations of his ancestors lived in the jungle."

"I suppose he might live in there for months," said Giles. "Curious race, the negro—what?" No doubt he can find things to eat which we would never think of—what?"

Manning, thinking deeply, had not heard the last few words. Virginia watched him anxiously, hopefully. She had long ago learned to count upon the resource of her brother. Presently Manning looked up, his face relieved, but still doubtful.

"There is but one man to my knowledge who can find Dessalines," he said, "who can find him and bring him out of that place."

"One of your negroes?" asked Giles.

"No," said Virginia quickly. "You mean Leyden!"

"Right!" cried Giles, "why didn't we think of him before!"

"I believe that Leyden could go about that swamp as you would roam around Oxford or Fenwick, Giles," said Manning. "If Dessalines can be found, Leyden is the man to find him. I shall make a simple business proposition of this thing; I am under obligation to this negro and mean to save his life if possible. Leyden's profession is to find things in savage places where other people are either unable or afraid to venture; I mean to wire Leyden to come back here and look for Dessalines."

"Oh, Manning, you wise old darling!" cried Virginia, and threw her arms about her brother's neck. If Manning was ever known to relax from his cool dig-

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nity it was at Virginia's outbursts of affection. She ignored any lack of reciprocation on the part of her brother; as a result he would usually reciprocate.

"Write your telegram, Manning," said Giles. "How are you going to put it?"

Manning meditated for an instant. "How's this?" He tore a leaf from his notebook, scribbled a few words, and handed it to Virginia who read aloud:

Have need of your professional services. Matter urgent. Friend lost in swamp. Postpone or cancel other engagements. Expense no object. Can you come?

MOULTRIE.

"That will fetch him!" said Giles emphatically.

"He can catch a sleeper to-night and be here in the morning," said Manning.

The wire was immediately dispatched, and so the matter stood. At midnight the black boy, who had ridden into the city with the message and had been told to await the answer, returned. The message read:

Expect me in the morning to conduct search for Dessalines.

LEYDEN.

"I say," cried Giles, "how do you think he knew that it was Dessalines?"

Virginia answered quickly. "He knew that Dessalines had failed in Hayti and was probably a fugitive; it would be natural to expect him to turn to his nearest friends for aid."

"Right!" cried Giles. "Then there was that matter of the runaway negro and the big tracks which Leyden saw by the roadside."

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"And from what he saw of the Caw Caw Swamp from the main dike he might guess that it was hardly a spot which we would choose for a picnic," said Manning dryly.

They discussed the matter for perhaps half an hour, when Virginia left them to dress for dinner. After she had gone Giles said to Manning:

"Do you suppose that Ginny hit that boulder when the pistol went off, Manning?" The Englishman's voice was anxious.

Manning uttered his hard little laugh. "It appears that she did, from her description; however, it makes little difference. If a lady can't shoot a cracker on her own plantation I should like to know whose plantation she *can* shoot one on. As far as that is concerned, Giles, there is a little account open between myself and the three other men." Manning's clean-cut features set rigidly; his eyes paled. Giles, law-abiding Briton that he was, stared at him amazed. There was something in the face of the Carolinian which was almost homicidal. "You see," pursued Manning, in his cold, even voice, "these men are virtually squatters on my land, although they pay a nominal rent. They have refused to recognize the authority of the mistress of the plantation and have even presumed to talk back to her with weapons in their hands." Manning's face grew a shade paler, his words dropped like pellets of ice. "They shall receive their warning to leave my land to-morrow, and if they refuse to do so, as I sincerely hope that they will, but doubt, it will be a matter for my personal attention!"

"What do you mean?" Giles's blue eyes began to kindle.

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"I mean," answered Manning slowly, "that I shall take my horse and my rifle and conduct these men personally over my boundary. Then I shall warn them that if they return they will be shot on sight." Manning's machinelike control slipped a trifle beneath the strain. "G— d— it man, trash like that talk back to my sister! If they had each a wife and ten small children it should not save them! As far as this brute of a negro is concerned I am willing to give way to popular local sentiment, but *as for my sister*——"

"*Manning!*" cried Giles, startled; for the face in front of him was livid with fury.

Manning laughed chokingly. "All right, Giles. Let's have a drink and go to bed."

The following morning Giles drove into Charleston to meet the naturalist.

"Well, Giles, I hardly expected to see you again so soon," said Leyden in his quiet voice. "Any news?"

"None; I say, it was mighty clever of you to know straight off that it was Dessalines."

"I could never make a living as I do, if I were to be balked by such a simple problem. Got a fresh team?"

"Yes; Manning said that there was no time to lose. The vultures are gathering already. I passed at least a dozen men with rifles on my way in."

"Like buzzards at the scent of blood. They love it. Never mind, we'll fool them. Tell me about it."

Giles told the story in his *staccato* way. Leyden listened attentively.

"It makes little difference whether the man was struck by Miss Moultrie's bullet or not," said Leyden.

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"There is no doubt but that Dessalines killed the man, and very probably—" he checked himself abruptly.

"Very probably what?"

"Oh! hid the body. So much the better."

"But do you really think that you can find Dessalines, Dr. Leyden?"

"Oh, yes, if he is in there. There would be no great difficulty about that. I may find him to-day if I can start by noon, in which case I will bring him out after dark."

"But how can you find him in a place like that?" asked Giles in an awed voice.

"My dear boy, for a man who has lived the most of his useful life on the trail, in the forest, it is as easy to find a man in a place like that as it would be for you to track a horse in a fresh fall of snow. Where he has rubbed the bark, where he has shoved aside the scum and moss which grows on the surface of such swamps, the way he would naturally go . . . it is all most elementary. It is after we get him out that our real trouble begins; to get him away, out of the country. If I had time—but never mind; at present, haste is everything."

Leyden was silent for over a mile; Giles respectfully held his peace.

"This negro Dessalines," said Leyden suddenly, "has no doubt gone straight back to savagery."

"Don't you think that he has had enough to make him do so?" asked Giles, ever loyal.

"More than enough for a negro; for any negro, no matter how civilized or well educated. You see, Giles, they have not so far to go; less far in fact than a dog, who for centuries has been the companion of civilized man, whereas negroes have been such for but very few

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generations. How amazing!" burst out the clear, ringing voice. "How appalling! How infinitely, inexcusably stupid that they should be considered for an instant upon the same plane as the white races . . . should have equal things expected from them . . . be equally punished when they fail to accomplish these! Think of burning a negro! Why, God bless my soul, it's as bad as burning a dog!"

"But where does the fault lie? In educating them?"

"Ah, no. Education is light, and light is what we all strive for. The system, however, is absurd; cramming their heads with empty words! You see, Giles, the race possesses a retentive memory which is a deceptive quality, as it does not indicate cerebration. A negro may hold a lot of facts, but he cannot combine them for use. His brain does not possess the requisite convolutions. I remember that when I was a child of six years I was taught the Ten Commandments in French. I had not yet learned them in Dutch, my mother tongue. I was made to recite this gibberish; was looked upon as clever, intelligent; was proud of my accomplishment. It took no thought, simply memory. Such a difference!"

"But where is the fault?"

"There is no especial fault; it is unfortunate. The fault was of course in bringing them into the country as slaves. To-day the sentiment is to atone for this, except among a lot of ignorant people who try to deal summarily with delinquencies which arise, and a lot of stupid or malicious people who commend such dealings. The fault is not worth considering; it is done. Spilt milk. The question is the remedy."

"And that——"

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"Time and patience; time and patience. The negro will never be a menace to this or any other nation until he has the mind to be one, and when he has the mind to be one he will have mind enough *not* to be one. He is not naturally vicious. Of course he can be goaded into sporadic outbreaks. He may be a tremendous nuisance; is now; will be; but a menace, never!"

Leyden's coming brought to Virginia a comforting relief from the tension of the last several hours; the relief which attends the arrival of the surgeon in a case of accident. Leyden's manner carried a distinct sense of sufficiency.

"These fellows have been organizing," said Manning, "and there has been some talk of attempting to search the swamp, but they have no boats. Nothing has been seen or heard of Dessalines or the man he carried off, but it appears that Virginia did not hit this chap." He handed Giles a mushroom-shaped leaden pellet. "I found this, beside the man's rifle, early this morning." He turned to Leyden. "What do you require for your search, Dr. Leyden?"

"Two day's rations and a *bateau*," replied the naturalist briskly. "Has anybody been into the swamp?"

"I think not; I gave strict orders that they should keep out, as I had a special officer coming; besides they have no boat. They are puzzled, but I think that they will obey my orders."

"About those three men?" said Giles diffidently. His face had cleared at Manning's information in regard to Virginia's part of the affair.

"They have been warned to leave my property at

once," said Manning in a hard voice. "I think it probable that they will do so."

"Do you think that it will take you very long to find Dessalines, Dr. Leyden?" asked Virginia.

"No, Miss Moultrie, not if he is still in the swamp, which I think probable. It may take me some time, however, to induce in him a condition of mind which will fit him to come out; it is this which I fear."

"What do you mean?" asked Manning.

"I mean that his present mental condition might be such as to endanger his safety. In that case I shall leave him there for a few days in the hope that food, rest, and the assurance of safety may have a quieting influence. By reporting no success, the search will be abandoned. It will then be easy to get him out. The next step is to get him out of the country."

"Can you not call upon the governor of the State for military protection?" asked Giles.

"Yes; if we wished to have him tried," said Manning. "If he has killed this man, as seems probable, it would be all up with him before a Carolina jury."

"Since we are all to become aiders and abettors in his escape," said Leyden, "let us do it thoroughly. He may be kept here in the house until the excitement has subsided, after which we can take him secretly to Charleston and put him aboard an outward-bound British tramp steamer. It will not be difficult to prevail upon the captain to earn a couple of hundred of dollars."

Manning frowned. He possessed in full the pride of his race, and furtive methods were hard to swallow; it would have been more to his taste to have surrounded Dessalines with a few armed white men of his choosing,

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and thus escort him aboard a vessel in defiance of the mob, the sheriff, and the law of the land. In his district he was feared and respected; he was not liked as his father had been, but he was known to be utterly fearless and as relentless as an Indian. He appreciated of course the futility of any attempt at open lawlessness.

"And now," said Leyden, arising from the table, for he had been taking some refreshment, "I will go in and look for our unfortunate friend."

"You are not going alone, are you, Dr. Leyden?" exclaimed Virginia.

"Yes, Miss Moultrie. "I—eh—think that this is best."

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The afternoon, the night, all of the following day—thirty-six hours—passed without tidings of Leyden or Dessalines. Midnight rested on Live Oak Plantation, hovered over the Caw Caw Swamp.

Virginia had retired, exhausted, semi-hysterical. Giles and Manning sat in the office and smoked innumerable cigars. Occasionally they would walk out upon the broad veranda which flanked the house, and listen. Far across the rice fields, where the still waters of the main canal drew a straight, black, gleaming line, fires sparked out here and there where the watchers, awed by the night, had gathered in groups for greater cheer, regardless of their self-imposed duties.

"They are getting tired of it," observed Manning; "another day will send most of them about their business. Some of them came to me this evening with a proposition to make a general search. I told them that in my opinion they were a set of fools to waste so much

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effort over one crazy nigger; that I had sent the officer in to look for the white man."

"Do you feel any anxiety about Leyden?"

"Not I. He has the faculty of taking care of himself developed to a most tremendous degree." Manning's quick eye caught a glimpse of a black figure beneath them. It slipped into the fig trees. There was a moon, old, yellow, for the most of the time shrouded by cloud masses.

"Who are you there? What are you doing?" Manning's raw voice cleft the soft air like a knife.

"Hit's me, Marse Manning, sah,—David." It was one of the house servants, wandering out through the morbid curiosity which has such a potent hold upon the race.

"Go to your quarters! If I sight any of you negroes out of doors I shall put a bullet into you—do you hear?"

The man fled like a black cat. Silence fell.

"Listen!" said Manning suddenly.

A foot crunched the gravel directly beneath the lattice of the veranda. Leyden's voice said softly in French.

"I have been waiting for you to send that fellow about his business, Moultrie. Is the way clear?"

"One minute," said Manning in the same tongue. He stepped inside the door and extinguished the lamp. "Come on," he said briefly.

Two dark figures silently ascended the steps and swiftly entered the shuttered room. Giles bolted the door behind them.

"Aristide!" whispered Giles, his voice trembling with emotion.

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"Giles!" came the muffled answer, vibrant, husky throated. "Giles . . . my friend!"

"Hush!" whispered Leyden sternly. "Light the lamp."

The flame struggled down the wick; the light strove upward. Giles and Manning looked toward Dessalines. He was enveloped in Giles's dark-blue raincoat which Leyden had taken with him. The garment was covered with mud and slime. Both men were drenched, muddy, covered with innumerable scratches from some of which the blood trickled. Dessalines' feet were bare; his face gaunt, but composed. His eyes never left Leyden, whom he watched as a dog might his master. Occasionally he was shaken from head to feet by a nervous chill.

"Eh, well?" said Leyden speaking in French, "you were not getting anxious? Our friend here was somewhat overwrought and required much assurance of his safety. Now he will be better for a dose of bromide and a bed." He turned to Dessalines. "Is it not so, *camarade*?"

"Yes, yes, dear doctor," replied Dessalines in a shaking voice.

"But tell us—" began Giles eagerly.

"Speak French!" said Leyden curtly. He turned to Manning. "Let us show Dessalines to his room. Is the way clear?"

"The house is empty," said Manning. "Come on." He picked up the lamp, then set it down again. "Never mind the light," he said, and led the way in the darkness to a room which had been prepared for the Haytian.

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"I will join you directly," said Leyden. "Wait for me in the office." Manning and Giles withdrew.

"Now my friend," observed Leyden to Dessalines, as he stirred a white powder in a glass of water, "you will take this and go to bed. No prayers to-night; you have prayed sufficiently for one day. You are to go to sleep, do you understand?"

Dessalines turned suddenly, fell at the feet of the naturalist, embraced his knees in his great arms. His sobs grew alarming.

"Quietly, *camarade*," said Leyden gently. He stooped and patted the huge shoulder. "Now go to sleep . . . do you hear me? Go to sleep!" He turned softly and left the room, locking the door behind him.

Manning and Giles were awaiting him in the office.

"About that white man?" were Giles's first words.

Leyden shrugged. "Who knows," he answered evasively, "never mind him. If one *will* meddle with heavy machinery——"

"Did you have any difficulty in finding him?" inquired Manning.

"None whatever. He was partially insane and I had trouble to quiet him. Then I judged it safer to wait twenty-four hours that he might get himself in hand." He sighed wearily. "Never did I listen to such agonies of prayer; it was a fatiguing adventure. Some whisky? . . . Ah, thanks. There is really nothing more to tell. *Ach!* Our perplexities have just begun. And now, if you will be so good as to excuse me, I think that I will retire."

CHAPTER XXIII

INTO THE LIGHT

HE is still asleep," said Giles, after he had greeted Virginia the following morning. "Leyden was up at six, after four hours of rest. Marvelous chap, Leyden; he'd had no sleep since he went into the swamp; said that Dessalines was in a fearful way when he found him, poor chap! Thought that he was back in Hayti at some sort of a heathen orgy. What a beastly place Hayti must be—what?"

"They have gone to Charleston?" asked Virginia.

"Yes, to see what can be done toward shipping poor old Aristide out."

"And you are sure that they were not discovered in coming here?"

"As sure as one can be of anything in a country like this. I say, Ginny, I beg your pardon, but really don't you think it's a devilish place?"

"I think that I prefer England," said Virginia smiling faintly.

"They came out under the very noses of those jackals around the fire by the main trunk," continued Giles. "Leyden said that the fire prevented them from seeing very far into the darkness, and that there are so many strange sounds about a swamp like that at night, that nobody noticed the splashing they made. When he was telling us about it I said: 'lucky,' and Leyden answered

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in his dry way, 'Yes; for them!' Do you know, I believe that he would have done for the last one of them if they had tried to stop him. Dangerous chaps, the quiet kind like Leyden—what?"

Virginia's face glowed. Perhaps it was fortunate for Giles that she had placed her affections before Leyden had come into her life; also that the naturalist was not twenty years younger,—but that is hardly fair.

"They waded all of the way from the swamp, over a mile, waist deep, in the canal of the closed reserve, then crossed into the Long Acre Canal, through the back sluice which cuts Turkey Island. There Leyden carried Dessalines across the road to the North Plantation, and from that place they waded through the salt marsh until they reached the cut-off. They waded up that to the mill, and will you believe it, Virginia, Leyden actually carried Dessalines on his back from the cut-off to the house. It must be half a mile; yet he didn't appear blown. Who would ever suspect that he was such a tremendous athlete?"

"He is not," said Virginia, "he is simply a naturally powerful man; an athlete would have needed a cinder track."

Giles stared. Sometimes Virginia puzzled him.

"Oh, I say, you're chaffing!" he began.

"So I am. Never mind, dear old pink-and-white!" and she gave him a kiss which puzzled him tremendously.

They spent a rather nervous morning; Dessalines still slept. As they were lunching, one of the house maids came breathlessly to the door of the dining room.

"Oh, Miss Faginny!" she gasped, "dey all white men a-gallupin' up de road wiv guns!"

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Virginia, white as the tablecloth, half rose from her chair. Giles, also white, arose quickly and walked to the front of the house. The sound of many hoofs reached Virginia's ear; the need for action rallied her and she joined Giles who was standing in the doorway. As Virginia glanced at his face, she saw a look which was entirely new to her. Her "pink-and-white" boyish lover had stepped aside to make room for the man in him; it thrilled the girl and made the crisis less fearful.

A cavalcade of a dozen riders was slowly approaching the house; some of them Giles recognized as the men who, with Leyden, he had met upon the trail of the negro several days before. The leader was the same; a handsome fellow, young, apparently of better caste than his followers.

Giles stepped out of the doorway and stood at the head of the long flight of steps. Virginia, standing in the door, watched him with a rush of pride. His head was up, shoulders squared; there were lines in the swell of the strong figure which betokened fight.

Slowly and in silence the cavalcade rode straight to the door, where at a sign from the leader they drew rein. The leader pulled off his great *sombrero*.

"Good evenin', ma'am! Evenin', sir!"

Giles bowed stiffly. "Good evening," he answered.

"We have come, sir, for that negra; we know that he is heah because he was followed last night by one of my men when brought to this house by your officer."

"Have you a warrant for his arrest?" demanded Giles, in a voice quite new to Virginia.

"We have, sir. Our warrant is the sanctity of

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Southern homes, and the autho'ity which lies herein!" The man tapped his rifle.

"Have you any legal authority?" asked Giles. "Do you act in accordance with the Federal law?"

He had unwittingly blundered upon the very worst word. A fierce murmur swept the group of riders. These men, cruel, savage, vindictive as they were, would not curse before a lady; one saw the blasphemies writhing upon their thin, cruel lips.

"No, sir; we do not."

"Then you cannot have him," said Giles, his voice curt, scorning to equivocate.

An audible murmur rippled beneath; the leader looked puzzled for an instant then smiled.

"I reckon' you are an Englishman, sir. No one else would talk as you do. I am afraid, sir, that you do not understand the customs of this country. We are bound to protect ourselves and we must do so in our own way. Your principles and your courage reflect great credit upon you, sir, if I may make bold to say so, but you mistake our purpose. We have not come to *ask* for the person of this negra; we have come to get him. When we get him we will take him quietly away and hang him. There is to be no exhibition. And now, sir, we shall proceed to enter the house." He made a motion to dismount, but Giles took a step forward and raised his hand.

"Mr. Moultrie has left me in charge here," he said. "As you say, I do not understand the customs of your country. Where I live we abide by the law; but I do not believe that there is any country where armed men have the right to enter the house of another man with-

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out his permission and without legal authority. You shall not enter this house while I live." Giles's voice was very quiet, very even, but it carried the ring of utter and unwavering finality.

A look of bewilderment passed from face to face; that a white man who was not an officer should deliberately lay down his life for a negro was more than these men could comprehend. Before the leader could reply Virginia sprang to Giles's side.

"Oh, *please* go," she cried. "*Please!* I am Miss Moultrie, Manning Moultrie's daughter." Her quick eyes picked out some white hairs in the troop. "You all knew Manning Moultrie!"

"And respected him, ma'am," answered one of the older men. "But Manning Moultrie would hev been with us, not against us."

"But you do not understand. This negro is a Haytian; it is the first time that he has been in this country." And in the same disjointed way Virginia poured out the whole tale, as she had heard it from Des-salines. Her words fell upon barren ground. Lack of imagination is the cause of many crises; the men before her were bewildered, not impressed. Failing to grasp the thought which she offered them, they clung stubbornly to their own preformed ideas. The ignorant prefer to follow a blind precept, rather than to strain the faculties of thought.

A silence ominous, ill-boding, followed Virginia's words. The leader, who was such by virtue of the greatest mentality, caught fragments of her argument. Alone he would have yielded; as it was, he felt that to yield would be to be supplanted. He possessed a little mind,

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but not enough to supply the wise, cool courage to be found only with a deal of mind.

"I'm sorry, ma'am," he answered softly, "but it don't make no sort of diffe'unce. We have come for this man; we mean to have him."

The high color was swept from Giles's face; a cold rage, a cold-blood rage, an inheritance direct from Berserker forefathers, welled up within him. He began to scent blood and it drove his wits from him. He was very young.

Ah, Leyden, Leyden; the wise, experienced, skilled player upon the emotions of men! How simple it might all have been—these single-unit brain cells would have lost their impulses in the wave of your fuller thought! You might have made them weep, laugh, rave, carry the man, whom they had come to slay, triumphant on their shoulders . . . recruit from their ranks a bodyguard! The pity of it!

"Come and get him then, you cursed cowards!" snarled Giles. He leaped backward, reached behind the door, whipped out a repeating rifle.

The ironic folly of it! The futility of blind courage!

The leader alone was stirred with something akin to sympathy. He was not a strong man; he was weak enough to be generous. He turned to the others.

"Boys," he said, "the dog-gone niggeh ain't wuth it! Let's go 'long."

There was a moment's silence, then a clamor; men slipped from their saddles, rifles in hand. Two aimed across their saddles at Giles; others ran, bent-kneed, to flank the house. Giles raised his piece. Virginia with a swift movement struck it from his hands and sent it

INTO THE LIGHT

clattering down the steps. The action was all that saved Giles's life in that instant.

Giles turned to her with a crazed, furious face, yet in his frenzy he realized her danger; then, as he glanced warily at his enemies, fearful for the nearness of Virginia, he saw that they had frozen in their tracks; rigid as wild beasts at first sight of their quarry, and the look in the cruel eyes told him that they had sighted theirs.

A heavy step sounded upon the planking over their heads.

"It is Dessalines—Dessalines!" gasped Virginia, pale as the fluted column against which she stood.

"Listen!" said Giles.

A deep voice rumbled out from above; a voice low in key, not loud, yet audible as the beat of a distant drum. Each word, though muffled, was distinct; it carried a cadence of infinite weariness, hopeless resignation.

"You have come to kill me," welled the deep voice. "To shoot me, and to send my wicked soul to hell." The key sank lower; the words became a moan. "You cannot send my soul to hell; it is already there." He paused.

The men, startled, awe-struck, amazed at tone and words, stood spellbound. Giles and Virginia were unable to see Dessalines; there was little need. His imposing image was reflected from the awed faces of those who had come to take his life. If at that moment the negro had seen fit to employ his eloquence to save himself he might have done so; as it was, he had come to look upon himself as already dead.

The whole night he had spent in shuddering terror; the long-drawn breathings, which those listening at his

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door had taken to be the respiration of profound sleep, had been the fathomless sighs of a spirit crushed beneath an agony of dread, paralyzed to all emotion save that of primitive fear; the terror of the naked pagan of an early age who fled howling as the lava flowed into the recesses of his Cambrian fen.

From that, Dessalines had passed to the dull stage of inert hopelessness which characterizes the negro race. The arrival of the vigilantes had partially aroused him from this dull lethargy; it had awakened no further fears; this emotion, taxed beyond its powers of translation in the still hours of darkness, had, like a sensory nerve subjected to crushing force, undergone anæsthesia, paralysis. In its place had come the depression of profound self-pity, as impersonal as if referred to another entity; a childish sense of the overpowering pathos of his condition, and with this the pitiful generosity of the honest, true-hearted if erring child. He had committed a fault; it was unavoidable that he be punished for it. His conscience was guilty, yet he felt that if the thing could be understood as it appeared to him, all would be forgiven. Yet, in a dumb way, he realized the hopelessness of this. Punishment was inevitable. Very well, but his playmates should not be punished for his fault.

The deep voice quavered out again. "Here I am," it said, and there was a heart-breaking cadence which pierced. "Here I am," he repeated. "Shoot me if you wish, but don't shoot Giles. Giles has done no harm."

A silence fell. The men wavered, puzzled, disturbed, oddly moved, swept by an emotion which they could feel

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but not comprehend. In this pause Giles recovered himself.

"Dessalines!" he cried in a choked voice. "Dessalines!" He stepped forward throwing out both arms.

"I tell you that this man is not guilty of any crime, more than any poor brute might be if he were hounded and hunted and driven mad from fear and hunger and hurts! He is a Haytian . . . an exile . . . an educated man. When he was driven from Hayti he came here; we knew him in England. Let me tell you how he saved the lives of Miss Moultrie and myself." With eager, rapid words he poured out the story of the rescue from the river. "He is guilty of no crime!" cried Giles.

"Yes, I am guilty." The heavy tones fell from above, sad, hopeless, half-muffled. "I am guilty, Giles." The rich voice quavered, whimpered. "I am very guilty, Giles."

"He is mad," said Giles to Virginia. "I must keep him quiet! Make him stop! he will say something. There, he is talking again!"

The sobbing whimper of a child quavered down from above. "I shall confess . . . and then you may shoot me. I did not mean to kill the man. . . ."

Giles sprang inside the door, and, followed by Virginia, he flew to the broad stairway, his only thought to reach Dessalines, to silence his self-incriminating words.

At the foot of the stairs they heard the rumble of the deep voice; halfway up the crash of a volley smote upon their ears.

Giles clutched Virginia's wrist. "Go back!" he cried. "Back to your room. Stay there until I come for you!"

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Virginia leaned against the wall, sick, shivering. Giles rushed on, passed through the room occupied by Dessalines, then out upon the balcony. He saw the cavalcade wheel, move slowly down the broad avenue, pass beneath the live oaks.

Dessalines' great body was huddled against the threshold of the balcony door. He held his head between his hands; the blood from half a score of wounds drummed upon the planking.

Giles sank beside him; threw his arm about the great shoulders. The massive head tottered, fell upon the shoulder of the Englishman.

"Poor Dessalines," whimpered the deep voice. "Poor Dessalines! Poor Dessalines!"

The words came faintly and with a strangled sob; the great frame rocked to and fro.

The tears gushed from the eyes of Giles. "Aristide!" he faltered.

"Giles . . . Giles . . ." came the feeble, plaintive voice—the voice of a little child. "Stay with me, Giles. Poor Dessalines, he meant no harm, Giles. Poor Dessalines——"

The head sank lower. "Poor Dessalines," came a soft whisper, and then the soul slipped out to greet the pitying God who made men Black and White.

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

DR. LEYDEN SUMS UP

AH, yes," said Leyden, "it is horribly pathetic; horribly! To me the whole race is pathetic wherever it has been brought into contact with ours. The pity of it; the pathos, the infinite pathos of the negro! Poor, dazed, bewildered black! dragged from the dark shadows of an African forest, loaded with chains, lashed through generations of slavery, and then—his shackles are knocked free; he is endowed at once with a soul, a voice, a vote; told to be civilized! Can we wonder that he grows bewildered?

"Mark him, my friends, this pure-bred African. It is seldom that you see him, but when you do, eliminate him from his fellows of semi-caste and scrutinize him closely. See! He is offended . . . scowls . . . mutters . . . looks murderous and *is* murderous, there is no doubt. His antagonist makes a jest. Like a flash his anger is whipped away; he grins sheepishly, more broadly, and with a flash of his white teeth; the other man is a funny fellow. He says something droll, and lo! our murderer of a minute past giggles, shouts with laughter, throws himself upon the ground, and rolls over and over in a paroxysm of mirth.

"But now, mark him as he rises! A woman working near him says a jeering word; he jeers in return, but half-heartedly, because he has learned to fear the

sharp tongue of the sex. The other women jeer at him in chorus, even as they pound the clothes which they are cleansing. Our negro rallies his repartee, is jeered again, loses his grip, turns away sulkily. The jeers follow him, when suddenly he burst into tears and flings away!

"Yet he has his moments of exaltation, periods when he is sublime. A child is sometimes sublime, but this sublimity of the negro is rather that of the faithful dog. He will live for a loved master; toil for him; die for him. With this master he knows no fear, no evil; without him he is a rudderless vessel.

"This negro of ours has no master, no rudder; he cannot sail a straight course in waters which are strange to him. He is a creature of impulse, the shuttlecock of his emotions, lazy, improvident, lacking in imagination, which he substitutes with fantasy; he is irrepressible, incomplete. Yet he has a vote, a citizenship; he must obey the laws of the land or receive his punishment!

"Now mark him when confronted with a problem. Ah, that is pathetic, absurdly pathetic! See his doubt, his uncertainty, his bewilderment. He has been sold a house, a boat, a horse and cart, on easy payments, with usurious interest. What does he know of interest? His imagination can scarcely carry him beyond the period of his next sleep! See him wrinkle his brow, scratch his woolly head, appeal blindly to a black friend, who, flattered and with no more knowledge than the asker, gives him childishly absurd advice! My word! There should be founded in this great nation, whose first instinct is fairness, a Society for the Prevention of Swindling of Negroes! It is so pathetic! He is so hopelessly out

of his place; so lost, bewildered, dazed, blinded by the light of a glittering white world!

“And the remedy? There can be in the nature of things no immediate remedy, for the only true remedy is time—time and infinite patience. The negro must be led upward, step by step, in the clear light of religion and education. He is from us a thing apart, a brother perhaps, but an infant brother, and as such I do not think that he is entitled to a seat in the conference of those of us who are his seniors in evolution. He is our care, our responsibility, and our racial inferior. In this great country of light, these things are coming to be known; the halls of learning are open to him, he is kindly entreated to enter and hear Truth; and that sweet religion which has been from its birth the greatest civilizing influence in the history of the world is imparted to him by wise lips.

“And the mulatto with these others who by virtue of fractional quantities of negro blood still dwell in the shadow? Once before, if you remember, I offended your sense of fitness by advocating the washing out of the yellow with the white. This is constantly being done, but not fairly, because the offspring of immorality come into the world with a heavy handicap. This washing out appears to me to be legitimate and just. When the White steps down from his higher pedestal and mates with the Black who is beneath him, then does the White become responsible for the result of his degeneration. The mulatto is the white man's shame, not the poor black woman's. It is just that the white race should accept the burden.

“*Ach!* But the remedy for all is time; time and

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charity, infinite patience, and the iron enforcement of the law of the land.

“Poor Dessalines! Poor, poor Dessalines! Poor negro; poor, pathetic race! Let us pray in our hearts that the God who has so chastened him may visit with wisdom the minds which govern the hands where rests his destiny.”

(1)

THE END

WHERE LOVE CONQUERS.

The Reckoning.

By ROBERT W. CHAMBERS.

The author's intention is to treat, in a series of four or five romances, that part of the war for independence which particularly affected the great landed families of northern New York, the Johnsons, represented by Sir William, Sir John, Guy Johnson, and Colonel Claus; the notorious Butlers, father and son, the Schuylers, Van Rensselaers, and others.

The first romance of the series, *Cardigan*, was followed by the second, *The Maid-at-Arms*. The third, in order, is not completed. The fourth is the present volume.

As *Cardigan* pretended to portray life on the baronial estate of Sir William Johnson, the first uneasiness concerning the coming trouble, the first discordant note struck in the harmonious councils of the Long House, so, in *The Maid-at-Arms*, which followed in order, the author attempted to paint a patroon family disturbed by the approaching rumble of battle. That romance dealt with the first serious split in the Iroquois Confederacy; it showed the Long House shattered though not fallen; the demoralization and final flight of the great landed families who remained loyal to the British Crown; and it struck the key-note to the future attitude of the Iroquois toward the patriots of the frontier—revenge for their losses at the battle of Oriskany—and ended with the march of the militia and continental troops on Saratoga.

The third romance, as yet incomplete and unpublished, deals with the war-path and those who followed it led by the landed gentry of Tryon County; and ends with the first solid blow delivered at the Long House, and the terrible punishment of the Great Confederacy.

The present romance, the fourth in chronological order, picks up the thread at that point.

The author is not conscious of having taken any liberties with history in preparing a framework of facts for a mantle of romance.

ROBERT W. CHAMBERS.

NEW YORK, *May 26, 1904.*

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

IOLE

Colored inlay on the cover, decorative borders, head-pieces, thumb-nail sketches, and tail-pieces. Frontispiece and three full-page illustrations. 12mo. Ornamental Cloth, \$1.25.

Does anybody remember the opera of *The Inca*, and that heart-breaking episode where the Court Undertaker, in a morbid desire to increase his professional skill, deliberately accomplishes the destruction of his middle-aged relatives in order to inter them for the sake of practice?

If I recollect, his dismal confession runs something like this:

"It was in bleak November
When I slew them, I remember,
As I caught them unawares
Drinking tea in rocking-chairs."

And so he talked them to death, the subject being "What Really Is Art?"
Afterward he was sorry—

"The squeak of a door,
The creak of a floor,
My horrors and fears enhance;
And I wake with a scream
As I hear in my dream
The shrieks of my maiden aunts!"

Now it is a very dreadful thing to suggest that those highly respectable pseudo-spinsters, the Sister Arts, supposedly cozily immune in their polygamous chastity (for every suitor for favor is popularly expected to be wedded to his particular art)—I repeat, it is very dreadful to suggest that these impeccable old ladies are in danger of being talked to death.

But the talkers are talking and Art Nouveau rockers are rocking, and the trousers of the prophet are patched with stained glass, and it is a day of dinkiness and of thumbs.

Let us find comfort in the ancient proverb: "Art talked to death shall rise again." Let us also recollect that "Dinky is as dinky does;" that "All is not Shaw that Bernards;" that "Better Yeates than Clever;" that words are so inexpensive that there is no moral crime in robbing Henry to pay James.

Firmly believing all this, abjuring all atom-pickers, slab furniture, and woodchuck literature—save only the immortal verse:

"And there the wooden-chuck doth tread;
While from the oak trees' tops
The red, red squirrel on the head
The frequent acorn drops."

Abjuring, as I say, dinkiness in all its forms, we may still hope that those cleanly and respectable spinsters, the Sister Arts, will continue throughout the ages, rocking and drinking tea untterrified by the million-tongued clamor in the back yard and below stairs, where thumb and forefinger continue the question demanded by intellectual exhaustion:

"L'arr! Kesker say l'arr!"

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